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THE

# CHRISTIAN STUDENT:

OR,

## A TREATISE ON

THE

## DUTIES OF A YOUNG MAN,

WHO

## DESIRES TO SANCTIFY HIS STUDIES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF M. COLLET,
Priest of the Congregation of the Mission, and Doctor of Divinity.

*My son, from thy youth up receive instruction, and even to thy grey hairs thou shalt find wisdom.* Ecclus. vi. 18.

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1821.

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# TO THE STUDENTS

OF

## *ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, OSCOT.*

*IT is fitting that this translation should be dedicated to you. For your sakes, and at the express desire of your superiors, it was begun; and in the pleasing hope of promoting your welfare for eternity it has been continued and completed. It is the work of one, whose delight it was for years to observe your piety and contribute his mite to nourish it; and it will be to him the purest satisfaction, if the result of his labour shall promote the smallest increase of your virtue.*



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*This little work has long been known and valued in its original language; the name of its venerable author is alone sufficient to recommend it to you and to youth in general. May it be your constant companion in your course of education; may you treasure up its precepts for your guidance through life; and may* God keep you in the years of youth, *and* be secretly in your tabernacle *even to your declining years.*

*January 7th,* 1821.

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THE

# AUTHOR's PREFACE

## TO THE FIRST EDITION.

I HAD only thought of labouring for Ecclesiastics, when a virtuous Priest, who employs himself very zealously in the sanctification of youth in colleges, requested me to do something for students in general. Some persons of a profession nearly similar, also invited me to it. Having been myself both scholar and



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master, though most unworthy, for a great number of years, I easily conceived that a work which included the principal duties of a good student, might prove of utility. But I conceived at the same time, that to have any success, it must not be too diffuse: because, as Quintillian says, a multitude of precepts confuses more than it instructs. It is for those who ought to take most interest in books of this kind, to decide whether I have attained my object; and still further, to trace out for me the plan I should pursue in a second edition, if the good will with which it was undertaken, may be accepted as a passport for this. I proceed to give an account, with my usual sincerity, of the plan I have followed.

I have included in ten chapters the principal obligations of a Christian Student. I have endeavoured to give him a just idea of his duties in relation to God, in relation to those who are charged with his conduct, in relation to his fellow-students, &c.

I have often cited at the bottom of the pages the Latin passages of Scripture, which

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are pointed out in the text of the book. Besides that they have in themselves a strength which a translation almost always weakens, it is very proper that a young man should see at an early period, that the holy Scripture is useful for every thing, and that it is the best source to apply to for rules of conduct. Some passages of the Fathers will be found also in their own language; but their number is not near so great.

As examples make more impression than simple reasoning, I have adduced some in different places; but I have brought forward none which could not bear a just criticism. I say a just criticism; for in an age where it is the fashion to doubt if there is a God, it may well be doubted if there have been faithful servants of him, and if these have performed miracles.

In citing some sayings or actions of great men, I have often marked their date; not to affect an erudition which costs no further labour than that of opening two or three books, but because young people generally like any thing historical; and in forming



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their heart, it is not amiss to form their mind at the same time.

It is for those who have approved my design, or inspired me with it, to unite with me in beseeching God to give it his benediction. Paul may plant, Apollo may water; if God gives not the increase, all their labour is vain. *Admonere possumus per strepitum vocis*, says St. Augustin; *si non sit intus qui moneat, inanis fit strepitus noster.*

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# GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

*For spending the Day in a holy Manner.*



I. It is desirable for scholars, as well as all others, to rise every day at the same hour. Since this cannot be done in many houses, where bed-time is sometimes earlier, sometimes later, it must at least be the object of your endeavours, to give only a certain time to sleep, and particularly to make such arrangements, as that morning prayer may never suffer by them.

II. As that sort of stupidity in which you find yourself, when you are neither properly asleep, nor well awake, is dangerous to virtue, you must accustom yourself to profit by these moments, to raise up your heart to God. It will not cost you much to exclaim: "My "God, I give thee my heart. Holy Virgin, "pure Virgin, I invoke you. My good an- "gel, do not abandon me to the fury of my "enemy who pursues me." This prayer


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may serve you frequently during the course of the day.

III. When the time of rising is come, do it quickly, that you may not sacrifice the first moments of the day to indolence: do it modestly, and never appear in a state, in which you may be an occasion of sin to any one soever. Take holy water; arm yourself with the sign of the cross. While you are dressing, say tenderly to our Lord: "I return thee "thanks, O my God, for having been pleased to preserve me during this night. If I "have had the misfortune to offend thee in "it, I most humbly implore thy pardon. I "offer to thee the prayer I am going to make, "and every thing I shall do this day."

IV. If the *Angelus* rings, never fail to say it: there is an indulgence of a hundred days for those who recite it at the sound of the bell; but it must be said kneeling, with the exception of the Paschal Time, on Saturdays at noon and in the evening, and the whole of Sunday. It is always well to say it in the morning, about noon, and in the evening; and still better to bow down very low at these words: *Verbum caro factum est*, to adore the self-annihilation of this God-Man, who, when he was rich became poor, and from Sovereign Master of all, became the servant and in a manner the slave of his own creatures.

V. Before you begin your prayer, you will

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call to mind for a moment what you are, and what the holy and awful God is, in whose presence you are. This short reflection will make you sensible how far you ought to carry your respect, attention, fervour, and sorrow for your faults. Join with it however, a spirit of confidence, and ground this upon the mercies of Jesus Christ. After this short reflection, you will make your prayer, either as it is in your catechism, or as you find it here. I divide it into five acts, the *first* of which consists in placing yourself in the presence of God. The *second*, in asking pardon of him for your sins, and in resolving to avoid those to which you are most subject. The *third*, in adoring him, after the method of St. Augustin, by faith, hope, and charity; important acts, which our holy Father Pope Benedict XIV. has enriched with an Indulgence. The *fourth* includes an offering of yourself and all your actions, after which you recite the ordinary prayers. The object of the *fifth* is to interest the saints in our favour; and it ends with the Litany of the Saint of Saints, which procures, for those who recite it with piety, according to the intention of the Holy See, an Indulgence of three hundred days.

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## MORNING PRAYER.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever. May it be glorified now and for all ages. Amen.

I. O my God, I believe thou art here present, and that the most secret recesses of my conscience are laid open and exposed before thy eyes. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to make thyself present to my mind, my heart, and my imagination. Alas, I give so little time to thee in the course of the day, grant at least that I may give this entirely and without reserve.

II. I most humbly ask pardon, O my God, for all my sins, and particularly for those I may have committed since the last evening. I detest them, because they displease thee, and thou art infinitely amiable. I purpose, assisted by the merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to avoid them all this day, and especially those to which I am most inclined. *Here you must think for some minutes of those sins which are most common to you, as loss of time, inclination to detraction, intemperance, immodest looks, words, actions, &c.*

III. I adore thee, O Lord, as my great Master, the King of kings, the Judge of the living and the dead, and my Judge in particular; the sovereign Truth, the object of my hope, and all my tender love. I believe, my

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God, all that thy Church proposes to be believed, because thou hast revealed it. I hope in thee, because thou art faithful to thy promises, and thy mercies are infinite. I love thee with my whole heart, because thou deservest to be loved above all things, and I love my neighbour for thy sake, as I love myself.

IV. O Lord, I offer thee my body, my soul, all that I am, all that I shall suffer this day; may all, O my God, be for thy glory, and for the remission of my sins. Alas, this day perhaps, may be the last of my life; do not permit me to have the misfortune to abuse it.

### *The Lord's Prayer.*

OUR FATHER, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come: thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### *The Angelical Salutation.*

HAIL MARY, full of grace, our Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

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*The Apostles' Creed.*

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting. Amen.

*Here may be recited the commandments of God and of the Church, imploring the grace of God to accomplish them faithfully.*

V. Holy Virgin, Mother and refuge of sinners, I throw myself with confidence into the bosom of your mercies. Be you my refuge in my pains, and my consolation in this valley of tears. Intercede for me with your adorable Son. Let me experience the power of your protection this day, all the days of my life, and principally at the hour of my death.

Angel of heaven, who watches over and guards me, regulate and support my steps so effectually, that I may not make one which may remove me from the path of holiness and justice.

And you, great Saint, whose name I have

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the honour to bear, obtain for me that I may walk in your footsteps, imitate your meekness, your humility, your laborious and penitent life, your purity and all your virtues; that after having served God, like you, upon earth, I may glorify him eternally with you in heaven. This I ask of you, in the name of him, to whose mercy you owe both your past merits, and the glory which rewards them.

## *Litany of Jesus.*

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|---|---|
| Lord, have mercy on us. | *Kyrie, eleison.* |
| Christ, have mercy on us. | *Christe, eleison.* |
| Lord, have mercy on us. | *Kyrie, eleison,* |
| Jesus, hear us. | *Jesu, audi nos.* |
| Jesus, graciously hear us. | *Jesu, exaudi nos.* |
| God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us. | *Pater de cælis Deus, miserere nobis.* |
| God the Son, Redeemer of the world, | *Fili, Redemptor mundi Deus,* |
| God the Holy Ghost, | *Spiritus Sancte Deus,* |
| Holy Trinity, one God, | *Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus,* |
| Jesus, Son of the living God, | *Jesu, Fili Dei vivi,* |
| Jesus, splendour of the Father, | *Jesu, splendor Patris,* |
| Jesus, brightness of eternal light, | *Jesu, candor lucis æternæ,* |

Have mercy on us. — *Miserere nobis.*

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| Jesus, King of Glory, | *Jesu, Rex Gloriæ,* |
| Jesus, the sun of justice, | *Jesu, sol justitiæ,* |
| Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary, | *Jesu, Fili Mariæ Virginis,* |
| Jesus, whose name is called Wonderful, | *Jesu, admirabilis,* |
| Jesus, the mighty God, | *Jesu, Deus fortis,* |
| Jesus, the Father of the world come, | *Jesu, Pater futuri sæculi,* |
| Jesus, the Angel of the great council, | *Jesu, magni consilii Angele,* |
| Jesus, most powerful, | *Jesu, potentissime,* |
| Jesus, most patient, | *Jesu, patientissime,* |
| Jesus, most obedient, | *Jesu, obedientissime,* |
| Jesus, meek and humble of heart, | *Jesu, mitis et humilis corde,* |
| Jesus, lover of chastity, | *Jesu, amator castitatis,* |
| Jesus, lover of us, | *Jesu, amator noster,* |
| Jesus, the God of peace, | *Jesu, Deus pacis,* |
| Jesus, the Author of life, | *Jesu, Auctor vitæ,* |
| Jesus, the example of all virtues, | *Jesu, exemplar virtutum,* |
| Jesus, the zealous lover of souls, | *Jesu, zelator animarum,* |
| Jesus, our God, | *Jesu, Deus noster,* |
| Jesus, our refuge. | *Jesu, refugium nostrum,* |

Have mercy on us. *Miserere nobis.*

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| Jesus, the Father of the poor, | *Jesu, Pater pauperum,* |
| Jesus, the treasure of the faithful, | *Jesu, thesaurus fidelium,* |
| Jesus, the good Shepherd, | *Jesu, bone Pastor,* |
| Jesus, the true Light, | *Jesu, Lux vera,* |
| Jesus, the eternal Wisdom, | *Jesu, Sapientia æterna,* |
| Jesus, infinite Goodness, | *Jesu, Bonitas infinita,* |
| Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, | *Jesu, Via, Veritas, et Vita,* |
| Jesus, the Joy of Angels. | *Jesu, Gaudium Angelorum,* |
| Jesus, the King of Patriarchs, | *Jesu, Rex Patriarcharum,* |
| Jesus, the Inspirer of Prophets, | *Jesu, Inspirator Prophetarum,* |
| Jesus, the Master of the Apostles, | *Jesu, Magister Apostolorum,* |
| Jesus, the Teacher of the Evangelists, | *Jesu, Doctor Evangelistarum,* |
| Jesus, the Strength of Martyrs, | *Jesu, Fortitudo Martyrum,* |
| Jesus, the Light of Confessors, | *Jesu, Lumen Confessorum,* |
| Jesus, the Spouse of Virgins, | *Jesu, Sponsa Virginum,* |
| Jesus, the Crown of all Saints, | *Jesu, Corona Sanctorum omnium,* |

Have mercy on us. *Miserere nobis.*



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Be merciful unto us, Spare us, O Lord Jesus. — *Propitius esto, Parce nobis, Jesu.*

Be merciful unto us, Hear us, O Lord Jesus. — *Propitius esto, Exaudi nos, Jesu.*

From all evil, — *Ab omni malo,*

From all sin, — *Ab omni peccato,*

From the snares of the devil, — *Ab insidiis diaboli,*

From the spirit of uncleanness, — *A spiritu fornicationis,*

From everlasting death, — *A morte perpetua,*

From the neglect of thy holy inspirations, — *A neglectu inspirationum tuarum,*

Through the mystery of thy most holy incarnation, — *Per mysterium sanctæ incarnationis tuæ,*

Through thy nativity, — *Per nativitatem tuam,*

Through thy divine infancy, — *Per divinam infantiam tuam,*

Through thy sacred life, — *Per divinissimam vitam tuam,*

Through thy labours and travails, — *Per labores tuos,*

Through thy agony and bloody sweat, — *Per agoniam et sudorem tuam.*

Through thy cross and dereliction, — *Per crucem et derelictionem tuam,*

Lord Jesus, deliver us. — *Libera nos, Jesu.*

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Through thy pains and torments, Through thy death and burial, Through thy glorious resurrection, Through thy admirable ascension, Through thy joys and glory, In the day of judgment, Lord Jesus, deliver us.

*Per languores tuos,*
*Per mortem et sepulturam tuam,*
*Per gloriosam resurrectionem tuam,*
*Per admirabilem ascensionem tuam,*
*Per gaudia et gloriam tuam,*
*In die judicii,*
*Libera nos, Jesu.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Spare us, O Lord Jesus.

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Parce nobis, Jesu.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Hear us, O Lord Jesus.

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Exaudi nos, Jesu.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Have mercy upon us, O Lord Jesus.

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis, Jesu.*

Christ Jesus, hear us.

*Jesu Christe, audi nos.*

Christ Jesus, graciously hear us.

*Jesu Christe, exaudi nos.*

Let us pray.

*Oremus.*

O God, who hast appointed thy only begotten Son, the Savi-

*Deus, qui unigenitum Filium tuum constituisti humani generis*



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our of mankind, and hast commanded that he should be called Jesus; mercifully grant, that we may enjoy his happy vision in heaven, whose holy name we venerate upon earth; who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, world without end. Amen.

*Redemptorem, et Jesum vocari jussisti; concede propitius, ut cujus sanctum nomen veneramur in terris, ejus quoque aspectu perfruamur in cœlis; qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE HOLY MASS.

THE Christian Religion possesses nothing greater than the sacrifice of the Mass, nothing more glorious to God, nothing more beneficial to man. Jesus Christ in this sacrifice becomes again our victim: he comes thither in person to apply to every one of us the merits of that adorable blood which he heretofore shed for love of us. Those then, who have it in their power, cannot be too strongly exhorted never to omit hearing Mass every day. But to hear it with fruit, it is not enough to be merely present in body. A person who assists at it with wilful distractions, who sees and salutes all who pass by him, who has neither modesty, attention, nor respect, insults Jesus Christ;

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renews the outrages of Calvary, and dishonours his religion.

There are innumerable methods of hearing Mass devoutly: but I prefer that in which you follow the priest with feeling and reflection. For this reason it is perhaps better to confine yourself to a certain number of principal actions, than to run on rapidly endeavouring to follow them all. You say a great deal; but the mind which does not well understand, and the heart which has no time to become penetrated, remain without light, and almost without unction. The following method then may be of assistance.

## PRAYERS FOR MASS.

*The priest goes to the altar with a religious modesty, entirely taken up with the great action he is about to perform. Enter then the church with a religious awe. Keep yourself there so recollected, that your eyes, your ears, your heart may be shut to every object but God. Say in your interior:*

I. I venture to present myself before thee, O my God. What confusion for me to appear before thee, covered all over with sin and misery! But thou art still willing to offer me a resource in the sacred victim which is about to be immolated: vouchsafe to apply to me the precious blood of this victim. Supply the dispositions which are wanting in me.



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Grant me those I should have had on Calvary, had I assisted at the sacrifice of thy passion.

*The priest descends to the foot of the altar. He places himself on a level with the people. He confesses aloud that he is a sinner. He beseeches the assistants to pray that God may shew him mercy. He continues to implore it by the merits of those saints, whose relics repose in the place where he celebrates. A moment after he repeats nine times those words which say so much, when pronounced in the sentiments of the publican in the Gospel:* Lord, have mercy on us. Jesus Christ our Saviour, have compassion on us. *In order to enter into these sentiments, you will say:*

II. I confess, O my God, that I am nothing but a miserable sinner. I acknowledge before heaven and earth, that I have had the unhappiness to offend in every way the most holy and the best of Masters. It is truly my fault, yes it is my fault, and my most grievous fault. O my Lord, I detest all my iniquities. I firmly purpose, with the help of thy grace, never more to relapse into them. Forget them then, O my God, I conjure thee by the merits of that spotless Virgin, whom thou hast made the refuge of penitent sinners; of the archangel St. Michael, who is the protector of thy people; of St. John the Baptist, who preached to us penance; of St. Peter, to whom thou didst principally give the power of remitting sins; of St. Paul, who contributed most to the conversion of the Gentiles; in a word, by the

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merits of all thy saints, and especially of those whose precious remains are here deposited. No, thy wrath will not stand against such powerful intercessors. I unite to them, with an humble confidence, him who is their Head, and to whose grace they owe all that they are. O Lord, have mercy on me. Jesus Christ, be merciful to me. *You will repeat this nine times: and in all the prayers here proposed to you, do not be afraid of repetitions; only fear tepidity and negligence.*

*The priest says the* Gloria in excelsis. *He unites himself with the angels, to whom the Church is indebted for the first words of this divine canticle. He celebrates the glory which God enjoys in the highest heavens, and the peace which he grants to those men whose hearts are upright in his sight. He praises the Lord, he blesses him, he returns him thanks for his splendid mercies, &c. In order to join with him, you may either recite this hymn entirely, as you have it below, or dwell with more leisure on some one of its parts. You may say, for example, returning thanks to God for the innumerable benefits you have received from him:*

III. Thou didst create me, O my God, without having any need of me. Thou didst preserve me at the very time that I was offending thee. Thou desirest also to apply to me the sufferings of thy divine Son. Thou invitest me to become worthy of the kingdom, which thou hast prepared for those who love thee. Do thou assist me to acknowledge with

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gratitude so many favours. Grant by a new grace, that I may never abuse them. O thou that reignest in the heavens, who art almighty, and who disdainest not to be my Father, receive the humble prayer which I address to thee. And thou, holy and innocent Lamb, who takest away the sins of the world, cast upon me a look of mercy. Save me, divine Jesus; thou alone canst do it, because thou alone art holy, thou alone art absolute Master, thou alone deservest to be infinitely adored, together with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of the eternal Father.

Glory be to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will. We praise thee, we bless thee, we adore thee, we glorify thee, we give thee thanks for thy great glory. O Lord God, O heavenly King, O God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, O Lord God, O Lamb of God, O Son of the Father, O thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us: O thou who takest away the sins of the world,

*Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad*

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receive our prayer: O thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us: for thou alone art holy, thou alone art Lord, thou alone art most high, O Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

*dexterum Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*

*The priest begs of God, by one or more prayers, the several graces of which himself and the faithful stand in need. Say then on your part:*

IV. My God, I ask of thee what thy minister is asking of thee in the name of thy whole Church. Give ear to his prayers and to mine. Grant us thy grace in this life, and eternal glory in the next: I humbly beseech thee through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*After these prayers, the priest reads the epistle, and a short time after it, the gospel, which is frequently followed by the* Credo. *Give this time to faith and the different acts relating to it. You may do it thus:*

V. I believe, my God, without any hesitation, all that is taught by thy divine Scriptures, and the Church who is their interpreter. I return thee a thousand thanks, for not having permitted me to be brought up in those unhappy countries which know not thy Gospel, or which have corrupted its purity. Increase my faith: make it lively and active. What an

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affliction is it to me to have so long belied it by my conduct; to have believed like a Christian, and lived like a pagan?

*After these acts, which are never well performed when they are hurried over, you may recite the common creed, or that of Nice, which is sung by the Church.*

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; consubstantial to the Father; by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and he was made man: was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate: he suffered and was buried, and the

*Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cœli et terræ, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula. Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri: per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de cœlis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est. Et*

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third day he rose again according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and is to come again with glory to judge the living and the dead: of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And one holy, catholic, and apostolic church: I confess one baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas. Et ascendit in cœlum: sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos: cujus regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem: qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam, sanctam, catholicam, et apostolicam ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.*

*After this profession of faith, which is only made on Sundays and on certain festivals, the priest offers up the bread and wine, which are to be the matter of the sacrifice. He offers them with an humble avowal of his unworthiness. He offers for his own sins and those of the faithful.*

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*The whole course of his ministry to the* Pater noster *is only, as it were, a repetition of this first oblation; except that before the consecration he offers the victim, as being about to be present on the altar; and after the consecration, he offers it as already present, and really immolated, although in an unbloody manner, by the sword of the sacred words. Thus you may, without any fear of departing from the spirit of the Church, give all this time to different acts of oblation. To make them more easily, by forming them after a certain method, you may divide them into four parts. You will say therefore:*

VI. O eternal Father, it is with fear and trembling at the sight of my innumerable sins, that I offer thee Jesus Christ thy Son, my Saviour and my Judge. Ah! do not cast thy eyes upon such a sinner as I am, till thou hast cast them upon that spotless Lamb, who is willing to implore pardon for me. What gratitude do I owe thee, for having given me so powerful a Mediator! But what a subject of confusion is it for me, that I have so ill corresponded to his infinite goodness. I detest my ingratitude, and firmly purpose never more to relapse into it. It is this adorable Son, it is this invaluable victim, whom I venture to offer thee for the expiation of my past insensibility, and all the crimes which followed from it. I deserve to be rejected: but wilt thou reject me this day when I present myself before thee covered with the blood of Jesus Christ?

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VII. Under the protection of this adorable blood, uniting my wants with the wants of others, I venture to offer it to thee for the holy Catholic Church, for all its pastors, for all the states which compose the society of the faithful, for the officiating priest, for my relations, superiors, and benefactors, for my friends and enemies, and very particularly for those to whom I have been a subject of scandal and sin.

*You cannot be too much reminded that these two last sorts of persons should form a great object of your charity. The first, to put a stop to the evil of which they become guilty in your regard, by injuring your goods, reputation, &c. The second, to arrest the evil of which you have been guilty in their regard, by inducing them to sin by your example, your solicitations, &c. For the same reason, you ought always to unite with the priest, who never fails to give a certain time for those who, although still indebted to the justice of God, have yet died in the sleep of peace, and in order to do it in a more animated way, takes the time when Jesus Christ is already present on the altar, although he prays for the living before the consecration. You may continue in this manner:*

VIII. Permit me, O eternal Father, while offering thee thy Son, to offer myself together with him. I do it with confidence, because I do it without reserve and without exception. Yes, my God, I make thee an absolute sacrifice of my body, my heart, my inclinations, my



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pains, my infirmities, of all that I hold most dear upon earth. I desire all that my God shall will, because my Saviour desired all that his Father willed.

*If these several acts, and those they will suggest to you, should take you as far as the* Pater noster, *do not think on that account that they have employed you too long; for the spirit of oblation and self-devotion ought to be that of a Christian, and this spirit of sacrifice never becomes him more, than when he honours the mystery of a God, who has offered himself, and still offers himself every day for him. But if your mind, more rapid or less fertile, does not find in these acts wherewith to entertain itself till the consecration, do not be afraid to repeat them, and do it always with fresh fervour. The heart, when it truly loves, repeats continually, and nothing is more delightful to it than such repetitions. The penitent Thais, by saying a thousand and a thousand times,* O thou who didst create me, have mercy on me! *gained more than she would have done by a long train of words.*

*The priest consecrates the body and blood of our Lord; and here is indeed enough to furnish new food for your piety. You behold on the sacred table no exterior change; and yet, at the voice of the priest, the heavens open, the Son of man descends, followed by a legion of angels who every where accompany him. Priest and victim also, he immolates himself, and is himself immolated. What subject is there better calculated to exercise your faith, your love, and your whole*

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*religion? In order then to do so, say with the Church:*

IX. I adore thee, O sacred victim, who comest a second time to open to me the gate of heaven. I adore thee, O Son of the living God: grant me, by thy infinite mercy, the same sentiments of tenderness and sorrow, with which I ought to have been penetrated, had I seen thee expire upon Calvary. Thou art my God, and *a God* near *at hand**; what respect then do I owe thee? Thou art my Saviour; and is there a name more sweet, more capable of animating my confidence? It is true that thou art also my Judge, and a Judge who findest blemishes in thy fairest works. But, O Lord, let me moderate this idea, by love, which at first filled me with fear. A Judge, who like thee has been pleased to take upon himself the iniquities of the criminal, will have no difficulty in forgiving him, if he beholds him humbly imploring his clemency. I do it now with my whole heart. Would he who has given thee all power to judge mankind, wish to stop the course of thy mercies? No, he will ratify all thy decrees without any prejudice to his justice. He finds in the humiliations of this Son, whom he engenders eternally in the splendours of the saints, a sacrifice which far surpasses those of Abel, and of the high priest Melchisedech. Nothing can displease him in this sacrifice, but the

* Deus de vicino ego sum. *Jerem.* xxiii. 23.



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impure hands of those who presume to offer it. Purify mine, O my Saviour; wash them in thy blood, whilst I wash them in my tears. I am a sinner: but it is the privilege of misery to attract the notice of mercy. I am a sinner, but I resolve to become a penitent. It is in this confidence that I beseech thee to admit me one day into the society of the apostles, martyrs, and all thy saints, that I may love thee, and glorify thee with them for ever.

*Whilst the priest says the* Pater noster, *recite with feeling and piety this prayer, which is truly that of the Lord. Here it follows a little explained.*

X. Grant, O my God, that I may be thy child, as thou art my Father. Do not suffer me to dishonour thy holy name, by pronouncing it at every turn, and without respect. Reign over my heart; reign over the hearts of so many nations who do not know thee. Grant that we may all reign with thee, and the blessed spirits. Accomplish thy holy will in us and by us, as it is fulfilled in heaven by thy elect. Give to my soul much more than my body, the nourishment which it requires to serve thee every day. Grant me that spirit of meekness and peace, which, in order to obtain mercy, is eager to shew it to others. Vouchsafe to secure me from the illusions of the devil, the temptations of the world and the flesh, from all evils past, present, and to come; and, above all, from

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the greatest of all, which is that of an evil death.

*All these prayers may dispose you, as well as the priest for the holy communion. The* Agnus Dei, *and the prayer which you will find further on, will dispose you for it in a yet more immediate manner. If you are not to have the happiness of doing it really, endeavour at least to do it spiritually. This spiritual communion, which consists in a great desire to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ, requires that you should be in the state of grace, or at least that you should truly desire to be in this state. It requires, consequently, that you make acts of sincere sorrow for having offended God, of ardent desire of being united to him, and of profound humility. Say to him, but always from the bottom of your heart:*

XI. It is thou, amiable Redeemer, who takest away the sins of the world. It is thou who givest true peace to a troubled soul. How happy would it be for me to be of the number of those, whose purity of conscience permits them to sit down every day at thy table! What a happiness for me to partake of the favours which flow from thy adorable person; to hold thee and keep thee in my heart; to rejoice that it has at last submitted to thy empire! But, alas! I am fully sensible that my house is not worthy to receive thee; *Domine, non sum dignus.* I will redouble my efforts to purify it. Accept, O Lord, these first glimmerings of conversion. Permit me,



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in consequence of them, to receive thee in spirit and in my heart, and let me be united to thee by the bonds of faith, of confidence, and of charity. Ah! I do not yet love thee enough; grant that I may love thee still more. Unite me intimately to thee, transform me into thee, that it may no longer be I that live, but thou alone who livest in me. Amen.

*While the priest says the prayers which follow the communion, gives the people his blessing, and recites the last gospel, you may say with utility:*

XII. I thank thee, O my God, for the favour which thou hast granted me of having some share in thy divine mysteries. I purpose to return thee sacrifice for sacrifice. Thou hast just immolated thyself for me, it is very just that I should be ready to sacrifice myself for thee. Yes, my Saviour, I readily accept all the crosses thou art pleased to send me; I desire to sanctify them by uniting them to thine. I renew and offer to thee all the good intentions with which thou hast inspired me during this Mass; and especially that of flying with horror from the very shadow of *such* and *such* a sin, to which I am most inclined. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I conjure thee to bless my resolutions. O Word made flesh for love of me, I unite myself to the adoration paid thee by the whole host of heaven, at the moment when thou didst appear upon the earth. I only ask of thee this favour, to be of the number of those, who

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not being born of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God, have just reason to hope that they shall reign one day with thee in glory.

*Returning home, you will do well to entertain yourself with the happiness you have just had in participating in the sacrifice of the new covenant. Those who, going away from Mass, give themselves up immmediately to dissipation and frivolous conversation with the first they meet, shew very plainly that they have derived little benefit from it. The centurion and others who, like himself, had been present at the sacrifice of the cross, returned striking their breasts: why do not you enter into the same sentiments? Do you not believe that the Victim, which has just been offered in your presence, is the same as that which was offered upon Calvary?*

## ADVICE

### FOR

### *SANCTIFYING THE ACTIONS OF THE DAY.*

AFTER Mass begin your studies as under the eye of God, and solely in order to please him. Offer your labours from time to time to our Lord, and always in a spirit of penance. This is a lesson which you must never lose sight of, and may be of great service to you.

Before you take your refection, always beg of God to give his blessing to it. Use it with

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temperance. Endeavour to sacrifice some small part of what would please you most. After the repast, do not fail to return thanks to him, to whose goodness you are indebted for it. In these days it is the fashion of the world to sit down to table and rise up from it, without saying a word to Almighty God: like the brute beasts, that devour their husks beneath an oak without raising up their eyes to the hand which sends them. Be you more wise: it will cost you very little to say before you sit down to table:

Bless ye. *A.* Let the Lord bless.

*Benedicite.* R. *Dominus.*

May the right hand of Jesus Christ bless us and what we are about to receive; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Nos et ea quæ sumpturi, benedicat dextera Christi; in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

*After the Meal you will say the following Prayer.*

We give thee thanks, O God, almighty King, for all thy benefits, who livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

*Agimus tibi gratias, Rex omnipotens Deus, pro universis beneficiis tuis, qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*

Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of

*Beata viscera Mariæ Virginis, quæ portaverunt æterni Patris*

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the eternal Father. *A. Filium.* R. *Et beata* And blessed are breasts *ubera quæ lactaverunt* which nourished Christ *Christum Dominum.* our Lord.

If you have not yet said the *Angelus*, this is the time to recite it.

In the afternoon you will resume your occupations, and take care to interrupt them from time to time, for instance from hour to hour, by a short and tender aspiration towards God. If you can find a few moments to read or listen to some good pious book, I exhort you take advantage of them. But good will is oftener wanting than time; we always find time enough to do evil.

Let your evening repast be always followed by prayer. You may divide it into five acts, the *first* of which will be to place yourself in the presence of God, and thank him for the favours you have received from him during the day; the *second*, to beg of him to make known to you in what you have had the misfortune to offend him; the *third*, to examine your conscience, by calling to mind whatever you may have done against God, your neighbour, or yourself; the *fourth*, to excite yourself to a proper sorrow for having displeased the best and most holy of masters: the *fifth*, to place yourself in the condition in which you desire to be found at the hour of death. These acts will be followed by the litany of the Blessed Virgin, who, after her divine Son our Redeemer, ought to be the first object of our devotion.

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As there are in this litany four or five expressions which you may not understand, I think it my duty to inform you, that the terms *mystical rose, tower of David, tower of ivory, ark of the covenant, &c.* are figurative expressions, which the Church, unable to celebrate worthily the Mother of God, has chosen from the Canticle of Canticles, and some other parts of Scripture, in order to give us the most sublime ideas of this incomparable Virgin. She is called then *mystical rose,* either because her virtues exhale an odour more sweet than that of the fairest flowers; or because she is without thorns, as is said without any foundation of the roses of Jericho. She is called *tower of David**, because she was erected by Jesus Christ, the true David, to serve as a retreat for sinners, as the citadel of David might serve as an asylum to his troops, in case they were too closely pressed upon by their enemies. She is called *tower of ivory*†, because she possessed its whiteness and purity in her manners, its firmness in all the events of her life; and she fights for us against the old serpent, as the elephant, from which ivory comes, makes war upon the dragon. Finally, she is called *house of gold,* and *ark of the covenant,* because if the God of charity, signified by gold, resides in her as in his house, she resides in him as in her inheritance, and it is only by her that he has made a covenant with us.

* Canticles iv. 4. † Ibid. vii. 4.

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## PRAYERS FOR NIGHT.

"COME, O Holy Spirit! enlighten us with "thy light, and inflame our hearts with thy "divine love.

I. "I adore thee, O my God, with that "profound respect with which the presence of "the God of glory, as thou art, inspires a "feeble creature like myself. I return thee "thanks for all the blessings which thou hast "bestowed upon me during my whole life, and "particularly this day. Do not permit my "ingratitude to stop the course of thy benefits: "thou detestest this monstrous vice; and I "detest it too for thy sake."

II. "Grant me grace, O Lord, to discover "in what I have had the misfortune to offend "thee this day. I am so blind, that I cannot "see my faults; so full of self-love, that I am "always ready to excuse them; so dissipated, "that those which I cannot justify, escape my "memory the next moment. Open thou my "eyes; rectify my judgment; call me back "to myself. I have no other intention than "to humble myself before thee and to correct "myself."

III. Examine yourself in silence of heart upon the sins you have committed, 1st, by thoughts, *sentiments of vanity, impure desires, unchaste thoughts, interior murmurings, hatred, jealousy, designs of revenge, &c.* 2dly, By words, *injurious language, detraction, provoking*

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*raillerics, false reports, indecent language, &c.* 3dly, By actions, *gluttony, criminal liberties, immodest looks, injustice towards your neighbour, &c.* 4thly, By omissions, *negligence in your duties of piety and in your studies, an unprofitable life and not referring all you do to God, &c.* Examine particularly if you have not relapsed into the faults to which you are most subject, and which in the morning you had resolved to avoid. If so, impose upon yourself some small penance, as to kiss the ground in a spirit of humility, to pra some time with your arms in form of a cross, &c. If you have offended any one, it will be very proper to make him an apology when you go out from prayer, in case you have not done it before. You will say then with a lively sentiment of contrition and penance:

IV. "How afflicting is it to me, O my God, "that I never enter into myself, without finding myself quite covered with crimes; and "to see every evening that I have almost "always violated the resolutions of the morning. I implore thy forgiveness from the "bottom of my heart; I cannot too much "regret that I have offended a God so good "and so worthy of love. I conjure thee by "that same mercy, the effects of which I have "so often experienced, to give me grace to "expiate them till the last day of my life by "a sincere repentance. Alas, my Lord! perhaps I am not far from that last day. Perhaps this night thou wilt require my soul of

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" me. Ah! Lord, permit me not, for a moment, " to run the risk of dying thy enemy. Help " me to place myself in that state in which I " should wish to be found, if I were to appear " before thee."

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, thro' my fault, thro' my fault, thro' my most grievous fault: therefore I beseech the blessed Mary ever Virgin, the blessed Michael the archangel, the blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

*Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis apostolis Petro et Paulo, et omnibus sanctis, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opere, meâ culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa: ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaelem archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos apostolos Petrum et Paulum, et omnes sanctos, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum.*

May the Almighty God have mercy on us, and forgive us our sins, and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

*Misereatur nostri omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis nostris, perducat nos ad vitam æternam. Amen.*



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| May the almighty and merciful Lord give us pardon, absolution, and remission of all our sins. Amen. | *Indulgentiam, absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus. Amen.* |

V. "Thou knowest, O Lord, that a poor "man is never weary of imploring. I have "just entreated thee to forgive me my sins; "I beg thee further by the merits of thy "passion, and by the graces with which thou "didst replenish thy holy Mother, to grant "me those which I stand in need of to be "pleasing to thee."

*Our Father, Hail Mary, I believe in God,* p. 5.

## *Litany of the Blessed Virgin.*

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| We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin. | *Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix, nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus nostris, sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper, Virgo gloriosa et benedicta.* |
| Lord, have mercy on us. | *Kyrie, eleison.* |
| Christ, have mercy on us. | *Christe, eleison.* |
| Lord, have mercy on us. | *Kyrie, eleison.* |
| Christ, hear us. | *Christe, audi nos.* |
| Christ, graciously hear us. | *Christe, exaudi nos.* |

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| God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us. | *Pater de cœlis Deus, miserere nobis.* |
| God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us. | *Fili, Redemptor mundi Deus, miserere nobis.* |
| God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us. | *Spiritus Sancte Deus, miserere nobis.* |
| Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us. | *Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis.* |
| Holy Mary, | *Sancta Maria,* |
| Holy Mother of God, | *Sancta Dei Genitrix,* |
| Holy Virgin of virgins, | *Sancta Virgo virginum,* |
| Mother of Christ, | *Mater Christi,* |
| Mother of divine grace, | *Mater divinæ gratiæ,* |
| Mother most pure, | *Mater purissima,* |
| Mother most chaste, | *Mater castissima,* |
| Mother undefiled, | *Mater inviolata,* |
| Mother untouched, | *Mater intemerata,* |
| Mother most amiable, | *Mater amabilis,* |
| Mother most admirable, | *Mater admirabilis,* |
| Mother of our Creator, | *Mater Creatoris,* |
| Mother of our Redeemer, | *Mater Salvatoris,* |
| Virgin most prudent, | *Virgo prudentissima,* |
| Virgin most venerable, | *Virgo veneranda,* |

Pray for us. — *Ora pro nobis.*



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| Virgin most renowned, | *Virgo prædicanda,* |
| Virgin most powerful, | *Virgo potens,* |
| Virgin most merciful, | *Virgo clemens,* |
| Virgin most faithful, | *Virgo fidelis,* |
| Mirror of justice, | *Speculum justitiæ,* |
| Seat of wisdom, | *Sedes sapientiæ,* |
| Cause of our joy, | *Causa nostræ lætitiæ,* |
| Spiritual vessel, | *Vas spirituale,* |
| Vessel of honour, | *Vas honorabile,* |
| Vessel of singular devotion, | *Vas insigne devotionis,* |
| Mystical rose, | *Rosa mystica,* |
| Tower of David, | *Turris Davidica,* |
| Tower of ivory, | *Turris eburnea,* |
| House of gold, | *Domus aurea,* |
| Ark of the covenant, | *Fœderis arca,* |
| Gate of heaven, | *Janua cœli,* |
| Morning star, | *Stella matutina,* |
| Health of the weak, | *Salus infirmorum,* |
| Refuge of sinners, | *Refugium peccatorum,* |
| Comforter of the afflicted, | *Consolatrix afflictorum,* |
| Help of Christians, | *Auxilium Christianorum,* |
| Queen of angels, | *Regina angelorum,* |
| Queen of patriarchs, | *Regina patriarcharum,* |
| Queen of prophets, | *Regina prophetarum,* |
| Queen of apostles, | *Regina apostolorum,* |
| Queen of martyrs, | *Regina martyrum,* |

Pray for us. — *Ora pro nobis.*

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| Queen of confessors, pray for us. | *Regina confessorum, ora pro nobis.* |
| Queen of virgins, pray for us. | *Regina virginum, ora pro nobis.* |
| Queen of all saints, pray for us. | *Regina sanctorum omnium, ora pro nobis.* |
| Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord, | *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, parce nobis, Domine.* |
| Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, hear us, O Lord, | *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, exaudi nos, Domine.* |
| Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. | *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.* |
| Christ, hear us. | *Christe, audi nos.* |
| Christ, graciously hear us. | *Christe, exaudi nos.* |

" Vouchsafe, O Lord, to grant me the grace " to enjoy a perfect health of soul and body; " and grant, through the intercession of thy " blessed Mother, that I may be delivered " from the afflictions of this life, and come one " day to the possession of life eternal. Thro' " Jesus Christ our Lord."

" I beseech thee also for the faithful who are " departed in thy love. Grant them, O my " God, the remission of all the faults which " they have not yet expiated; and make " them enjoy that pardon which they have



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" always desired. Bless, O Lord, the repose I " am about to take, that I may be enabled to " serve thee better. Holy Virgin, Mother of " my Saviour, and after him my sweetest " hope; my good angel, my holy patron, pro- " tect me by your intercession during this " night, during the whole remainder of my " life, and at the hour of my death. Amen."

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONFESSION.

I. MAKE choice of a good director. Your salvation may depend upon your choice. If you have only preferred your present one because he is easy with you, you are lost.

II. Go often to confession. Once in a month is not too often. Confession is never more easy, nor more sure of its effect, than when it is frequent. You do not remember your sins one or two days after having committed them; and will you remember them, if you delay confessing them for three or four months.

III. That you may examine your conscience with greater facility, go over the commandments of God and of the Church, the seven deadly sins, the occasions which usually prove fatal to you: do not forget your predominant passion.

IV. When you are examining sins of consequence which have appeared outwardly, pay

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attention, as far as you can, to the number of persons who were witnesses of them. There is a great difference between giving scandal to one child, and scandalizing three; between calumniating a brother before two persons, and calumniating him before six; between soliciting a stranger to sin, and soliciting a relation; and all relations are not equally distant.

V. You are a Christian, and you are a scholar: here then you have matter for a double examination. You will find the first in a great number of books of piety, and the second a little further on. Before you enter upon this discussion, which is always painful to nature, you will ask of God the grace to do it well. For this purpose you will say the following prayer, always bearing in mind that there is no true prayer, but that which comes from the bottom of the heart.

*Prayer before the Examination of Conscience.*

"I cannot deceive thee, O my God, and I "know that whatever I might conceal from "thy minister, would be one day made mani- "fest to the whole world. But, O Lord, ig- "norant and blind as I am, I might easily "deceive myself, esteem that as good which "is evil, and that as trivial, which provokes "thy anger. O thou whose piercing eye be- "holds all my imperfections, vouchsafe to "make them known to me, as I shall know "them one day at thy dreadful judgment!

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" Let no considerable ones escape me. But, " my God, hear me yet further; grant that I " may detest them sincerely, and that I " may never fall again into any which may " separate me from thee."

To assist you in the examination of the sins which regard you in your character of a student, I proceed to put you in mind of some of those which are most common to persons of that profession.

## EXAMINATION OF A STUDENT,

### CONSIDERED AS SUCH*.

I. HAVE you not spoken against religion, or taken pleasure in hearing such discourse? How many times in a day, or a week, and for how long a time?

Have you not read books against religion? Have you not lent them to others? and to how many persons?

Have you not applauded those who turned to ridicule the ceremonies of the Church? Have you not made improper applications of the Scripture, or laughed when you heard them from others?

Have you not either too much doubted or too much presumed upon the mercy of God? Have you not said within yourself, that we must amuse ourselves while we are young, and that it was enough to be wise when we grow old?

* This examination was communicated to me by a director well acquainted with college affairs.

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Have you made acts of faith, hope, and charity, as often as you ought?

Have you not treated those who were good and serious as bigots, hypocrites, and wishing to court the favour of their masters? Have you not sought to seduce them after their first communion? Have you not leagued with others in order to succeed?

Have you given your heart to God when you awaked? Have you offered him all the actions of the day? Have you said your morning and night prayers with attention? Have you not put yourself at those times in an unbecoming posture? Have you not laughed or talked with those near you? Have you not at that time thought or said something bad? Have you said grace piously? Have you not omitted it through human respect? Has not this human respect prevented you from doing good and appearing virtuous, notwithstanding the good advice of your masters and your confessor? Have you not given yourself up to sleep during spiritual reading, sermons, &c.? Have you not found fault with the length of them, &c.?

Have you loved your fellow-students in a Christian manner? Have you not sought to quarrel with them? Have you not gone so far as to strike them, and even those who had received the tonsure? Have you not used passionate words to them? Have you not wished them some evil, or have you not rejoiced at what evil has befallen them? Have you not carried to their

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master false accusations against them, or even true ones, through a spirit of revenge? Have you not encouraged those who were quarrelling or fighting, instead of reconciling them with each other? Have you not detracted those whom you disliked? Have you not excited others against them? Have you not listened with pleasure to the evil that was said of them?

Have you loved and respected your masters? Have you not answered them disrespectfully? Have you not lowered them in the esteem of your parents, friends, or companions, by representing them as unjust, ignorant, &c.? Have you not conspired against them, and induced others to resist them? Have you not shewn a want of respect for them, either by not saluting them, or doing the contrary to what they desired you?

Have you not every day lost a good deal of time, and how much, one day with another? Have you done your duty in time of study, and learnt your lessons well? Have you behaved seriously at that time? Have you not had your lessons told you, or done others tasks for them? Have you not deceived them, when they asked you some words, by telling them wrong?

In your recreations, have you not been too passionately fond of play? Have you not been angry with others, when you were unsuccessful? Have you not cheated in your games, or taught others to cheat?

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II. Have you never taken the holy name of God in vain? Have you not used bad, gross, indecent, or other such words, often used in a passion, or to affirm a thing which did not require it? Have you not made use of such words for falsehood as well as truth?

Have you not told lies, either in jest, or in excuse, or to excuse others? Have you not gone so far as to lie, in order to boast of evil which you did not commit? Have you not been snappish and satirical in your discourse: and have you not employed this satirical turn in ridiculing your companions, and even your masters? Have you not, by so doing, sowed discord, and excited quarrels?

III. Have you heard mass on Sundays and holidays, and have you heard another mass if you only came in to the first as late as near the gospel? Have you not given way to frivolous thoughts during a part of the sacrifice, and particularly at the time of the consecration? Have you not perhaps been so unhappy as to read bad books at that time, to look at dangerous objects, and to direct the notice of others to them? Have you not complained of a mass being too long, and ridiculed the priest who said it? Have you assisted at vespers on those days, and with piety? Have you not done some servile work on those days, as making balls, &c.?

IV. Have you had a proper respect for your parents, your superiors, prefects, &c.? Have you not been stubborn towards them?

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Have you never thought of striking them, or opposing them by force?

V. Have you not wished death, or some evil, and what evil, to your neighbour, or even to your parents?

Have you not rejoiced when your brothers or sisters were ill, in the hope of becoming richer by their death? Have you not had ill-will against them? Have you not ill treated them by words or actions? Have you not been jealous of them, because you thought they were more favoured than you? Has not this set you against them, against your parents, and especially against a step-father or step-mother?

VI. Have you not had bad thoughts, in which you took pleasure? Have you not been guilty of indecent actions? Have you induced others to commit them, and how many? Have you not taught them some evil?

Have you not looked at bad pictures, or fixed your eyes on dangerous objects? Have you pointed them out to others? Have you spoken with others about them? Has not this produced bad desires in you? What was the object of those desires? Has not this happened on Sundays and holidays, and lasted whole hours, &c.? Have you not been to plays, and have you not been guilty of these faults when you were there?

Have you not frequented bad company? Have you not boasted of it before others? Have you avoided such particular friendships

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as your director or your masters forbid you: and if you have avoided them, was it not merely because they had their eyes upon you?

Have you not sung bad songs, or made others sing them; played soft and dangerous airs, made indecent verses? Have you shewn them to others, and to how many? Do you keep them still?

Have you read bad books? Have you lent them to others? Have they not filled you with impure thoughts and bad desires? Have you not borrowed such books of your companions? Have you burnt them when your confessor directed you? Have you made known to your superiors those corrupted companions, when your confessor enjoined you to do so?

VII. Have you not stolen money from your parents? Have you not asked for more than was necessary for some expences at college? Have you never stolen from your companions? Have you not induced them to steal from others, fruit in the country for example? Have you made restitution when you were able? Have you admonished your accomplices to do so? Have you made restitution for them when they refused, when you had stolen in company with them? Have you not kept other's property when you found it, without enquiring for the owner?

VIII. Have you not eaten meat on days of abstinence, without necessity, through hu-



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man respect, or to shew that you were not scrupulous?

IX. Have you let a long time pass without going to confession; and when you did go, was it not rather because the rule of the college obliged you to it, than from a real desire of being reconciled to God? Have you examined your conscience well? Have you made a sincere act of contrition? Have you not contended to go the first to confession, that you might go to play the sooner? Have you not entered the church or chapel in a thoughtless manner, without respect, without taking holy water, without making the sign of the cross? Have you listened with attention to the advice of your confessor? When you promised to do what he required of you, were you resolved to execute it? Have you not forgotten it on leaving the sacred tribunal? Have you not even been to see those whom you had been forbidden to visit?

Have you never had the misfortune to conceal some grievous sin, through shame, or fear of being scolded? Have you received absolution in this state? Have you presumed after that to approach to communion? Was not this the case at your first communion, or when you communicated at Easter?

Have you not been deprived of communion at Easter, because you had not made any efforts to correct yourself? Have you not amended for a short time, for fear, that if you

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did not go to communion with the rest, you might be looked upon as a libertine? Have you not joked upon this subject with false friends, who were no better than yourself? Have you not engaged them to do like you, that you might not be remarked by your superiors?

When your confessor has put off your Easter communion, have you placed yourself in such a state as to comply with your duty as soon as possible, as you were obliged? Have you not said in your mind, that it should be for the next year? Have you not led your comrades to adopt the same sentiments?

Have you not omitted your penance entirely or in part, under the pretext of its being too long? Have you performed it with attention? Have you not repeated to others what your confessor said to you; advising them not to confess such and such a sin, because they would be too much scolded, or because the confessor told their sins to the masters, which is a notorious calumny?

After this examination, which regards the commandments of God and the Church, a student should go over the seven deadly sins, which do not form a part of the foregoing examination. For example: If he has not boasted of what he did better than others; that he was nobly born, rich, &c. If he has not lowered his companions, to make himself esteemed; if he has not appeared very important before his masters; if he has not said they were



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men of no respectability; if he has not opposed them; if he has not despised and insulted servants; if he has not been too familiar with them; if he has given alms to the poor, when he had it in his power; if he has not driven them away harshly; if he has not quarrelled with and insulted strangers passing by; if he has not eaten or drunk to excess; if, being an ecclesiastic, he has not frequented public houses; if he has not solicited others to intemperance; if, through curiosity, he has not read their letters, overheard their confessions, repeated to others what he heard, &c.

*Prayer before Confession.*

THE happy day then is come, when I am to discharge the heavy load of my sins. Fortify, O Lord, this my resolution. Cast thy eyes upon a soul who returns to thee in earnest, and who seeks nothing else but to wash away her stains in the salutary streams of penance. Give me grace to approach with the necessary dispositions. Do not permit that the dumb devil, that a false shame shall shut up my mouth. I hope this from thy goodness. I have said, in the holy transport which thy mercy caused in me: I will confess all my irregularities: I will discover my most secret wounds; I will in all things witness against myself. Shall I blush to declare in the ear of thy minister, those excesses of which I have so often and so scandalously made a boast? But, my God, this is but an inconsiderable

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part of my obligations: I owe a victim to thy much injured mercy. I offer thee my heart. Break it, consume it with sorrow. Let this sorrow be universal, that it may extend to all. Let it be sovereign, so as to exceed every other affliction. Let it come from thy Holy Spirit; he only can call me back to thee. Let it penetrate all the recesses of my soul. I must indeed be insensible, if I do not detest those moments of horror, wherein I offend the most tender of Fathers, the best of Masters, the most beneficent of Friends, my Redeemer, the most lovely of the children of men. May my sorrow equal my offences! How much do I fear, my God, that I am very far from these dispositions! Supply for my weakness, O Saviour, agonizing in the garden of olives. Distil into my heart a drop of that sea of bitterness with which thy soul was then inundated. Let my sin make me sorrowful, and sorrowful even unto death. O Eternal Father! this is what I desire: I hope thou wilt confirm me in this desire, when I offer thee the merits of a Son, who is the tender object of thy good pleasure, and who has suffered all for love of me. What ought I not to expect from thy mercies?

*Prayer after Confession, when you have not received Absolution.*

How afflicting, O Lord, how painful it is to me, to have just reason to fear that I am still thy enemy! I do not hesitate to consent



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with my whole heart to the sentence of thy minister. A hasty absolution would have ruined me, a prudent delay will strengthen me. A sinner, so unworthy as I am to kiss thy feet, is not worthy to be admitted all at once to thy chaste embraces. But how long will this afflicting separation, this sad anathema, continue! I am told that my lot is in my own hands, and that the tree is only known by its fruits. Ah, Lord! do thou thyself plant, water, and give the increase. I will be united to thee. A second and a third trial shall not discourage me. Night and day will I seek him whom my soul begins at last to love. I shall be in trouble, in mortal disquietude, until I have found him. Since it is his love alone that keeps him from me for a time, I shall at length possess him. I will take hold of him, like the Spouse in the Canticle. I will hold him with the most lively tenderness, and I will proceed so cautiously, as never more to have the misfortune to be separated from him.

*Prayer after Confession, when you have received Absolution.*

Is it then true, O my God, that criminal as I was but a moment ago, I am now become an object which thy eyes can endure? Has one single act of humiliation procured for me a favour which all my blood would not have sufficiently paid for? It is to thine, my amiable Jesus! it is to that precious blood which

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thou hast shed for love of me, that I am indebted for so great a favour. How is my condition changed! I beheld nothing but thunder over my head, and hell beneath my feet: but now on whatever side I turn my eyes, I see nothing but thy mercy, and just motives for hope. But, O Lord, thy grace discovers to me here at the same time new subjects for sorrow and confusion. Can I see an irritated God return to me so easily, and not conceive a new sorrow for having so cruelly offended him? Can I behold all that he does for me, and not be ashamed at the little I do for him? I will change my conduct, O my God, by the help of thy grace, and replace all my vices with the contrary virtues. I will sin no more: I will endeavour to live well. Ye criminal pleasures who have seduced me; fatal occasions, in which my courage has been shipwrecked with my innocence; dangerous companies, of which I have too long been the slave, I renounce you for ever. The pardon which I have just obtained, calls for all my gratitude; it requires my whole self. Happy, O my Saviour, if like the prince of the apostles, I can tell thee by vigilance and tears, that I love thee: more happy, if, like him, I could tell it thee by the effusion of my blood!

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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMUNION.

WHEN you expect to have the happiness to communicate, on a Sunday or a festival, you must begin to dispose yourself for it some days before, and at the latest, on the eve of the day on which you are to perform this great action. If you recollect but for a moment, that you are to receive a God who comes to you with his hands full of graces: who desires nothing so much as to impart them to you; who never showers them down more willingly, than when they are to be dispensed with profusion, and who then only withholds, when the languor of man contracts his own dispositions: you will not hesitate to do all that shall depend on you, to prepare for him a dwelling in your heart as worthy of him as possible. Three or four visits to the Blessed Sacrament, were they only for five or six minutes each, would be very well placed. If your duties do not allow it, endeavour at least to supply by some fervent aspirations. These short expressions, *Come, Lord Jesus: When wilt thou come, O thou beloved of my heart? My soul sighs after thee, as a thirsty hart will pant after a stream where it may quench its thirst:* these words, I say, and others of this nature, which a faithful soul will always find in her heart, will cost you little, and will benefit you much. You may join to them each day a reading of some verses of the 4th book of the *Following of*

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*Christ*; it is a book full of the spirit of God; and capable of rousing the most torpid faith. You will redouble your exertions as the happy moment draws near, when you are to receive your Spouse. Acts of faith, humility, confidence, and the most tender love, are those which should most occupy your mind. You will find these united in the following prayer.

*Prayer before Communion.*

" Accustomed as I am to thy bounty, I am " quite astonished, O my God, at the new " and signal favour thou art about to confer " upon me this day. Is it then possible that I " shall have the happiness to receive him " whom the highest heavens cannot compre- " hend; this Word whom the angels desire to " behold, and whom they look upon with " trembling; this sovereign Master, in whom " resides the plenitude of the Divinity? Yes, " it is himself, who under these feeble appear- " ances is ready to give himself to me. I do " not doubt it; his word secures me against " the testimony of my senses. But, O Lord, " the more I am convinced of it, the more my " surprise increases. What! shall a worm " of the earth, a sinner, a mere nothing, that " has so often proved rebellious, dare to ap- " proach the holy God, to feed on the bread " of angels, to receive within him the King of " Majesty and Glory! Ah, Lord! I am not " worthy of it; I should remain all my life " like the publican at the gate of the temple, " if thou didst not invite those who are in pain

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" and trouble to come to thee, and eat thy " divine flesh, that they may find in it eternal " life. But alas, O Lord, how many others " have found in it their death! Do not per- " mit me to be of that unhappy number. I " detest anew all my sins; animate my hope, " which wavers at the sight of my past mise- " ries. Although washed already in the wa- " ters of penance, I conjure thee with an " humbled king, to wash me yet more and " more. Create in me a new heart, and renew " within my bowels that spirit of rectitude and " innocence which always finds favour with " thee. Thou hearest me, O God ever good, " ever full of mercy. I may almost say, with " one of thy greatest servants*, that at length " I love thee; that thou hast wounded my " heart with one of the arrows of thy love, and " that the consciousness I have of it does not " allow me to doubt. I desire at least to be " able to say so to thee all the days of my life, " without contradicting my conscience. If I " have found a difficulty in loving thee, can I " find any in returning thee love for love? " Come, Lord Jesus, my heart is ready. If it " is not yet entirely so, cast upon it one of " thy tender looks. Thou canst with one " glance dispose it, soften it, and inflame it."

Returning from the holy table, retire to some place where you may enjoy the intimate

* Non dubiâ, sed certâ conscientiâ amo te, &c. *St. Augustine.*

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presence, the communications, the sweets of your Beloved. Close your eyes to any other object but him. Consider yourself as the living tabernacle where the Holy of Holies resides. It is not the image of my God, it is himself, it is his body, his soul, his divinity, which I actually carry in my bosom: what idea can be better calculated to banish from my mind every kind of distraction; to nourish, to redouble my love!

*Prayer after Communion.*

" I have at length then the happiness to " possess thee, O my amiable Jesus! Ah! " if for having watered thy feet with tears and " perfumes, Magdalen became the object of " thy compassion; if for having touched the " hem of thy garment a woman doubly in- " firm was cured in an instant, what has " not a sinner room to hope for, to whom thou " hast given thyself entirely, and who now " makes one flesh with thee? Why cannot I, " O my Saviour, correspond to such a prodi- " gious favour? Why have I not all the hearts " of angels and men, to love thee as much " as thou deservest to be loved? Let me " love thee at least as much as I am able! " May I love thee a million times more " than myself! May I love all that I am " bound to love, in thee and for thee; and " may I never love any thing, but for thy " sake! Alas! I have begun very late to " love thee, O Beauty always ancient and " always new! Grant that I may recover by

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" a redoubled tenderness all the moments
" which I have lost. Reign, triumph in me:
" be thou the God of my heart, and the portion of my inheritance. False pleasures of
" the world, frivolous joys, which formerly
" appeared to me so sweet, have you ever
" given me sentiments like those I experience
" this day? My Beloved, he who dwells
" among the lilies, is mine, and I am his.
" His conversation leaves no disgust, no remorse, no bitterness. Do not interrupt,
" O my Jesus, these consoling communications. Speak, for thy servant heareth. Let
" not the earth cover* thy blood nor thy
" words. All is of infinite value: I will turn
" all to profit.

" But, O Lord, permit me to pour out into
" thy fatherly bosom my fears and my uneasiness. After the said experience which I
" have so often had of my frailty; after having so many times seen my firmest resolutions wrecked upon a grain of sand, can I
" still rely upon myself? No, my God, it is
" solely upon thee that I found my reliance, it
" is in thy adorable name alone, that name
" which is the foundation of salvation, that I
" place my confidence. Thou hast now given
" me thyself; what wilt thou not give me,
" if I oppose no obstacles to thy holy
" liberality? Vouchsafe to dispel for ever
" these fatal obstacles. Thou desirest that I

* *Job* xvi. 19.

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" should live for thee alone; and I should be
" very unhappy if thou didst oblige me to live
" for others. I know the world too well,
" with its darkness and perfidy, to let my-
" self be a second time seduced by its deceitful
" promises. It is to thee, O Lord, and to thee
" alone, that I wish to attach myself. I offer
" thee all, I sacrifice all to thee; health,
" strength, interest, promises, contempt, or
" esteem, I place all at thy feet. I reserve
" only my heart, and this I will keep for thee
" alone. Anathema to him who loves not the
" Lord Jesus, and two-fold anathema to all
" that could separate me from him*. Thus
" then, O my God, no more thoughts, desires,
" words, or actions, which might be in the
" least contrary to purity or charity; no more
" impatience, improper conversation, lies,
" quarrelling, and detraction; no more
" omission of my duties, neglect of things
" commanded me, languor in my exercises of
" devotion; no more dangerous and too ten-
" der connections, or too familiar friendships;
" no more aversion to the contempt, or deli-
" cacy upon the judgment of men; and above
" all, no more loss of time, fatal loss, which
" was the beginning of all my irregularities.
" It is before thy eyes, adorable Saviour, with
" my hand on the breast which has the hap-
" piness to possess thee, that I make these re-

* Journée du Chrétien.



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" solutions. Confirm them, since they are " thy work, and give me grace to persevere in " them to the end."

The holy communion should not hinder a student from fulfilling such of his ordinary duties, as are compatible with the sanctification of Sundays and holidays. But it is proper that he should assist more assiduously at the divine offices. In those tumultuous houses, where one scarce has time to breathe, you must build up within your heart an interior solitude; retire thither at intervals, and repeat from time to time: " Jesus, my crucified love, " fasten me to thy cross. Let the old man " die there with all his concupiscence. I live, " but it is no longer I, it is my Saviour who " lives in me. Draw me after thee, O my ami- " able Redeemer! I will follow thee every " where, and even to this bloody mountain, " where thou art immolated. Thou art the " God of Glory upon Thabor, thou art particu- " larly my God on Calvary."

You may also read some chapter of the same fourth book of the *Following of Christ*. But, I repeat it, you never read well, unless you read with reflection. A hasty reading never goes to the heart: and what does it avail you, when it dies upon your lips?

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# THE CHRISTIAN STUDENT,

OR,

*A Treatise on the Duties of a Youth who desires to sanctify his Studies.*

I AM very much edified, my dear Theotime, to see, that at an age as yet tender, you ask for some rules of conduct to sanctify your studies. This perhaps, of all points, is the one upon which we are the least importuned: by a happiness too rare in these times, it is the one upon which you have the least need of instruction. Formed almost from your infancy to the most sublime virtues, by a mother who possessed them all; educated by masters who unite piety with learning, and who account learning as of no value, when it is not united with piety, you have till now met with nothing in your way but examples capable of giving you the most animated lessons, far more moving than those of words. I should, however, feel reproach of conscience, if I did not accede to your desires. I yield the more willingly, as the new career which you are about to run will expose you to new dangers; as there are many occasions in which a pious lecture revives those ideas, which the intercourse with the world and our own passions do all they can



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to weaken; and in fine, because what is not necessary for you, is but too needful for others. I enter then upon my task. Beseech the Sovereign Master to bless my labours. The prayer of the just man is very efficacious*, that of a youthful heart would seem still more so.

## CHAP. I.

*A good Student must begin by engaging God on his Side.*

WHAT I here declare to you, seems to have been announced by reason alone to the wisest of the Pagans. The Roman poet would have them begin by the father of the gods: *A Jove principium.* But, alas! what could the feeble philosophy of Paganism effect? Delivered up to the wanderings of her mind, and the illusions of her heart, she pretended at most to please such divinities as she would have blushed to imitate. It belongs, Theotime, to the true religion alone, to the religion of Jesus Christ, to furnish us with just ideas of our duties. Let us both consult her, and she will teach us that a student should, before all

* Multùm enim valet deprecatio justi assidua.—*Jacobi* v. 16.

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things, begin by engaging God on his side. 1st, Because this is the sole means of sanctifying his studies; 2dly, Because it is also the only means of reaping any solid fruit from them; 3dly, Because it is the easiest thing in the world, and the most consoling.

I. Yes, my dear son, the fear of God, the love of him, and fidelity in observing his law, are the only means of sanctifying your studies. If you ever lose sight of this great Master, if the sap of his spirit enters not into the plan of your exercises; in a word, if you labour without referring your labour to his glory, you will be more to be pitied in your most brilliant success, than that slow and dull scholar who blesses God for the mediocrity of his, and is careful to pay him homage for the single talent which he has been pleased to entrust to him. Your learning will be but the learning of a Pagan, and it may very easily prove in the end the learning of the reprobate. The applause which you receive will be only a fatal poison to your heart, which will spoil and corrode it more and more. The knowledge you acquire every day, oftentimes very superficial, will puff you up, and make of you, according to the expression of the great apostle, *but a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.* Hence will arise by degrees looks of contempt at those who are below you; indocility towards your masters; an itching to speak alike of what you know and what you are ignorant of;



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hence, in a word, that train of faults which render a young man odious, and but too often terminate in an end the most deplorable.

You have a great and melancholy example of this in that old friend, who finished his humanity studies when you commenced yours. Beautiful as they represent angels, meek, modest, always even tempered, the only one who did not perceive his own elevated genius: fathers, mothers, professors, and even servants, all strove to proclaim him one of the most perfect models that a student could propose to himself. The reason of all this was, that then he was virtuous; that instead of confining himself to precepts, he proceeded to the practice of counsels; that he was often surprised at the foot of the sanctuary, prostrate before that holy God, who alone can form the heart and mind as they ought to be; that he never began his studies without having implored his assistance; that when he had been less successful than usual, he humbled himself beneath his hand, saying with the Royal Prophet: *Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me;* that in his brilliant success which was so often crowned, he blushed at the praises which could not be refused him; that he referred them to the Author of all good, and had recourse to his favourite sentence: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.*

I will not recall to your mind the fatal fall of this young man, once so accomplished. An

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unfortunate journey, in which they relied too much on his virtue, and during which he neglected his ordinary exercises of piety; a sickness which followed this journey, and which was not serious enough to make him enter into himself; the company of two libertines, who rallied him upon his former devotion, and gave him a disgust for resuming it; all this contributed to make his company as contagious as it before was edifying. I suppress the remainder of this tragical history. You know, that abandoned to dissipation from morning to night he forgot in less than two years a good part of what he had learnt; that he was found to be a more shallow philosopher than he had been a good rhetorician; that he possessed neither just ideas, nor solid labour to rectify them. But you know moreover, Theotime, that it was in these melancholy circumstances, that death, who knows no distinction of age, surprised him. Happy, if the tears he shed in the arms of his old director, were as sincere as they were abundant, if they could find favour for him before the Sovereign Judge. It is for you, my dear son, or rather it is for all those who embrace any state of life, to draw from thence this consequence, that in order to succeed in it, they must be sanctified in it; and in order to sanctify themselves, they must do no single thing therein, which does not tend to the glory of God. The great apostle did not exempt from this law the most common actions, as are those of eating and

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drinking* ; shall we dare then to except those which form our daily occupation, and which are to serve as a foundation to the rest of our life? Let us establish then as a principle, but as a capital and immoveable principle, that a student should do all he can to procure the blessing of God; that without this, his studies are absolutely thrown away; because all that is not done for God, is nothing, and can be at best but illusions and vanity. This is the confession made at last by a prince who had more knowledge than we shall ever possess; a prince who, by his immense researches, could follow nature from the hyssop to the cedar of Libanus, and whose wisdom travelled to the extremities of the earth, to awaken the attention, and perhaps even to excite the emulation of a great and virtuous queen†. I repeat it, the love of God, and the care to procure his favour, are the only means which a student can possess of gathering solid fruit from his studies. I would even venture to say, without however meaning this for a general rule, that it is often the only means he has of making real progress in the sciences.

II. Is it not then true, that it is God who

* Sive ergo manducatis, sive bibitis, sive aliud quid facitis, omne in gloriam Dei facite. 1 *Cor.* x. 31.

† Et disputavit *Salomon* super lignis a cedro quæ est in Libano, usque ad hyssopum, quæ egreditur de pariete : et disseruit de jumentis, et volucribus et reptilibus et piscibus. 3 *Reg.* iv. 33.

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is the Father of our minds; that it is he who maketh eloquent the tongues of infants *; who giveth knowledge to them that possess it, and understanding to those who are filled with it; who proves when he pleases, by the example of Daniel and his virtuous companions, that a youth may triumph over all the wise men of Babylon, and that their empty acquirements, compared with his knowledge, are mere uncertainty and darkness. Yes, it is from this first Master that every perfect gift descends, as from the source of ligts †. And on whom should he principally pour out his treasures, if not on those who fear him, who love him, who faithfully observe his law, who labour only for his glory? Let a young man then begin by serving him well; let him draw near to him with confidence, he will be enlightened, and he will not receive from him those humiliating repulses which we so often meet with from creatures, when we are reduced to implore their favour ‡.

But perhaps we shall be told, we often see pious scholars who make but little progress in

* Sapientia·····linguas infantium, fecit disertas. *Sap.* x 21.——Dat sapientiam sapientibus, et scientiam intelligentibus disciplinam··et lux cum eo est. *Daniel* ii. 21, 22.

† Omne donum perfectum, desursum est, descendens a Patre luminum. *Jacobi* i 17.

‡ Accedite ad eum et illuminamini, et facies vestræ non confundentur. *Ps.* xxxiii. 6.

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learning. We see others on the contrary, who notwithstanding their little virtue, always keep the best places, and whose talents are the admiration of every one. And what then were those ancient philosophers, whose name and glory subsist even in our days? Without true religion, without God, without Christian virtues, sometimes even without Pagan ones, the sublimity of their genius was the admiration of their age, and is still the admiration of ours. What fire in their poetry! What vigour in their discourses! What warmth, what interest in their histories! After this, how can we persuade ourselves that piety contributes to the sciences? Should we not be tempted to think that it forms even a sort of obstacle to them? Such, Theotime, is the mighty objection of certain people, and this is my answer.

I confess that God is master of his gifts, and, that as he makes his sun to shine upon the good and the bad, he sometimes gives to his enemies more natural talents than he imparts to his dearest favourites. It is then with the riches of the mind, as with those of fortune. We see very upright men spending their lives in a painful mediocrity, and decided libertines abounding in riches, and living in delights. But do not deceive yourself, Theotime, the most wealthy, the most happy, is not he who has the greatest treasures *; it is he who

* Non in abundantiâ cujusquam vita ejus est ex his quæ possidet. *Luc.* xii. 15.

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makes the best use of them, and is the most contented with his lot. And I venture to say, that without doubt, it is he who is most devoted to God, who serves him with the greatest fidelity, who knows how to adore his holy will with the most profound submission. The rich man, who swims in plenty, is tormented by an insatiable thirst to heap up new treasures. He squanders those which he possesses, rather with fury than with enjoyment: in a word, he is really poor, or if you will, he is really miserable in the bosom of his pretended happiness. This other, who has no more than he absolutely wants, returns thanks to God for his mediocrity. He knows that God has in some measure pronounced a curse upon riches; that they have ruined, and still ruin every day an infinity of persons; and that the voluptuous man spoken of in the gospel, would perhaps have been saved like Lazarus, if like him he had been reduced to the most painful indigence.

Let us only take, my dear Theotime, from this comparison, what immediately makes for our subject. Let us then form a parallel of two young scholars, one of whom has a superior genius; the other has no more than will just suffice to make that progress which has nothing striking in it, and gives no room for admiration or envy. The first passes for an eagle. He devours in less than a week all the difficulties which obstruct his passage. Each day supplies him with a fresh tribute of

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knowledge. Others are born poets, and become orators: he seems at once to have been born both. For the rest, he is a Christian only in name. If he prays, it is only with his lips. If he assists at the public offices, it is only by constraint. In a word, the exercises of religion are but insipid nourishment to him. Follow him, Theotime, from this moment to the end of his career, and you will see that this fine genius has received nothing more fatal, nothing that should make him tremble more, nothing that should give him more torture at the hour of death, than the elevation of his mind, and the abundance of his lights.

While he was yet young, he was proud, full of contempt for those of his companions whom he easily surpassed, and jealousy against those who contended well against him, or excelled him. Haughtiness, cabals, murmurs against his masters, these were as the first sallies of all the vices which were afterwards remarked in him in more advanced age. Vanity, the mother of every excess, gave birth to them in double proportion with his years. He was every thing, but what might be called an upright man. Void of true integrity, and without affection, he mortally wounded his best friends, and was mortally wounded by them in turn. On a close examination, it was discovered that he was more daring, than solidly clever. He gave out his reveries for real histories, his most unmeaning paradoxes for incontestable principles, his errors for truths.

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He owes to his impiety alone the better part of his pretended glory. He has a horror for every man of virtue. He avoids himself, the sight of his own person makes him shudder. The idea of eternity which is advancing, freezes his very veins. This insurmountable sentiment, which Tertullian calls the *testimony of a soul that is naturally Christian*, pursues him every where; and if ever he dies of a lengthened sickness, he will die agitated by the darkest furies: *sceleruni furiis agitatus Orestes.*

The other, on the contrary, always attached to God, always humble, has unceasingly made good use of the single talent which he had received from him. By little and little he has performed by assiduous labour a part of what a happier genius does almost without any effort. Although an attentive eye discovered in him a justness of ideas, a fund of reasonings, which his modesty always concealed from him, he scarcely thought himself capable of the lowest employments; it was even necessary that the authority of those who regulated all his steps, should constrain him to accept them. The wisdom which presided at his counsels, preserved him from the false steps which are made every day by men who only depend upon their own capacity. A virtuous ecclesiastic, an equitable magistrate, a faithful and well informed man of business, there was no one found who could say any evil of him. His career flows happily along; and according to the expression of the scripture, he sees his last



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moments advance with a firm fixed eye and great courage: *Spiritu magno vidit ultima.* (Ecclus. xlviii. 27.)

Compare these two men together, and tell me, under the eye of truth and conscience, which you would rather resemble, especially when summoned to appear at the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. For my part, said the great St. Jerome, on a very similar occasion, I would rather have the sackcloth of Antony with his merits, than the purple of kings, with all the delights with which they are inundated. In the religion of Jesus Christ there is but one sentiment on this important point: and whoever has a tincture, however slight, of the gospel, will always prefer, with the pious à Kempis *, an humble peasant who loves God with his whole heart, to a proud philosopher, who, like the man of whom I am speaking, studies the course of the stars, and neglects to study himself.

It is true, that this brilliant and fertile genius made a great noise while he was upon earth. But at last, notwithstanding his fine talents, real or pretended, he had many contradictions and disappointments to suffer. His

* I speak according to the general opinion. M. L'Abbé Valart, in the beautiful Latin edition which he has given of the Imitation, maintains that this book is more ancient than Thomas à Kempis, and that it is from the pen of John Gersen, Abbot of Vercelli.

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reputation, as to honour and behaviour, was very equivocal; and if by the grandeur of his sentiments, and his engaging address, he had deluded and deceived the whole world, it is very certain that he could not deceive him who searches the heart, and from whose eyes nothing can escape *. It may be, that his memory is still living among men: but what does it avail him, to be praised on earth, where he is not, while he is tormented in hell, where he will be for ever? This is the reflection of a holy doctor, and it well deserves to be meditated upon seriously.

III. After all, does this reputation, the flattering idea of which is so enchanting to young persons, go so far as they imagine? You learn every day some verses of the New Testament. It is the practice of your college, and I congratulate you upon it. Read then, in the Epistle to the Romans, the humiliating portrait which St. Paul draws of the Pagan philosophers, and there you will learn to appreciate their merits. They gave themselves the name of wise men, says the Apostle †, and in reality they were only fools. For the worship of the true God, of whom they could not be ignorant, they substituted the worship of

* Ego sum scrutans renes et corda. *Apoc.* ii. 23. —Non est ulla creatura invisibilis in conspectu ejus. *Hebr.* iv. 13.

† Dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt. *Rom.* i. 22 *et seq.*



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birds, serpents, and even roots that grew in their gardens*. The Creator was the only one they did not adore. For this, delivered up to a reprobate sense, they disgraced themselves by the most abominable acts of impurity. Covetous, deceitful, murderers, without reason, without friendship, without rule, without compassion, without submission to their parents, they merited the indignation of God, and will deserve, to the end of ages, the contempt of all those who are not deluded by a false and glittering exterior.

Full of respect as you are for the sacred Scripture, you will not appeal from this judgment. Should any one of your acquaintance be tempted to find it too rigorous, entreat him to run over with you the various academies of the ancient sages of Greece: you will soon force him to agree with a writer of our own times †, that Pagan antiquity *has possessed no one sect of philosophers, who did not maintain considerable errors.* The greater number of the disciples of Pythagoras were grossly deceived upon the nature of God and that of the soul. Anaximander, one of the heads of the Ionian sect, believed that the gods were born and died at considerable distances of time. Plato,

* Every one knows this exclamation of an ancient satiric poet: *O sanctas gentes quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis numina.*

† See La Theologie Payenne, par M. de Butigny, tom. 2. ch. 34 et 36.

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*the divine* Plato, adored Jupiter, Juno, and all the fabulous divinities of the people; and thus, he either betrayed the truth, or was ignorant of it. The community of wives which he approves of, is more worthy of a libertine than a sensible man; and this is not the worst of his errors. Aristotle, whose morality is so much extolled, seems not to have known that man has duties to perform towards God. He scarce says a word upon Providence. He says less than nothing of the immortality of the soul, and nothing at all of the recompense of the good, and the punishment of the wicked after death. I pass over in silence the shameful philosophy of the Cynics. It is better to be ignorant of it, than to endanger your purity.

It would be easy to shew you, that the manners of these boasted men were not worth more than their doctrine. I do not deny that there were found traits in their lives which were very striking. But without staying here to appreciate Pagan virtues, I can safely say that you will not find a single one of those who have most affected to make profession of them, who did not disgrace himself, I do not say by passing defects, for every one is liable to these, but by those marked and permanent vices which utterly exclude the state and habit of justice. Pythagoras will present you in his own person an impostor of the highest kind, uniting to the most monstrous pride the most excessive superstition; the *just* Aristides, a



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wretch abandoned to those abominations which drew down of old upon certain unhappy cities a deluge of fire; Socrates, although declared by the oracle of Apollo to be the wisest of mortals, a wretched voluptuary, who was always the public friend of the most vicious persons and the most infamous courtesans. You will find in Plato a good part of the same defects. Aristotle will present others, and the two Catos will not be exempt. But such a detail is painful to humanity. You want no more, Theotime, to make you conclude with St. Paul*, that the ancient philosophers never made men just, and that all these sages, destitute of the love of God, were so strangely led astray, that not one of them can be found who practised virtue in a pure and uniform manner. From this first consequence it will be easy for you to deduce another, that in order to succeed in your studies, you must sanctify them; that moderate success is infinitely more valuable, and with the blessing of God more fruitful, than the most brilliant success where his grace is diregarded; and that, as there are many who are dead in the sight of the Lord, although they appear full of life in the eyes of men†, there are also many who

* Non est justus quisquam, non est intelligens, non requirens Deum. Omnes declinaverunt··Non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum. *Rom.* iii. 10. *et seq.*

† Nomen habes quod vivas, et mortuus es. *Apoeal.* iii. 1.

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have the reputation of learning, and sometimes even of wisdom, although their pretended light is only darkness, and their wisdom nothing but folly.

IV. But perhaps a young man cannot belong to God without making the most prodigious efforts, and to merit his protection, he must encounter monsters at every step. I will not conceal it from you, Theotime, it costs much to give one's self to God. His kingdom suffers violence, and it is not at all made for those cowardly sons of Ephrem, who, always ready to fight, when they find no one in the way to oppose them, turn back almost immediately when the enemy appears*. But, —you know it by happy experience,—as soon as you set seriously to work, the difficulties are soon smoothened down; they quickly change into delights. They are chains, it is true; but these chains, formed by divine love, diffuse over the members which wear them a vigour which they had never before known. The service of a master so amiable as is the God of Christians, is a yoke full of sweetness, and a burden which, contrary to the order of nature, eases those who have taken it upon themselves: *jugum meum suave est, et onus meum leve.* A scholar who truly belongs to God, enjoys a peace which the whole world

* Filii Ephrem intendentes, et mittentes arcum, conversi sunt in die belli. *Ps.* lxxvii. 9.

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would not have been able to procure for him. The serenity of his countenance is but a feeble expresssion of that which reigns in his heart. Always even tempered, always full of affability, he not only offends no one, but he bears without any emotion the little transgressions and sallies of his companions. Without any affectation of devotion, he instils it into his friends, and sometimes into those who are not so. Without making himself a master, he brings back by a word full of tenderness, a young man beginning to go astray from the right path; and oftentimes he effects, by natural ways, and by the benediction which God attaches to the tongues of children, what a master, full of holy anxiety, was not able to do with all the energy of his zeal. Do you wish for a sensible example of all this, read the history of Henry Mary Boudon, who died Grand Archdeacon of Evreux. The following is the substance of what is related of him by those who have written his life. Pious as you are, I am sure that this piece, although somewhat long, will not fatigue you.

V. "The first care of the young Boudon, "on his arrival at Rouen, was to unite him- "self in heart and affection to those scho- "lars who appeared to him the most solid "and prudent. Though a disciple in relation "to his masters, he soon learnt, by a certain "air of candour and ingenuousness, by blame- "less behaviour, and above all, by that pow- "erful command given by such virtue as is

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" never found in fault, to make himself the
" absolute master of all those whom grace
" made worthy to be admitted to his so-
" ciety."

" But what then could be done by a child
" of his age? I answer, what persons of thir-
" ty or forty would scarce venture to attempt:
" He taught some the good employment of
" their time, and particularly to study like
" perfect Christians; he taught others to raise
" themselves sweetly up to God by the means
" of prayer and meditation; these in what
" manner they were to proceed, in order to
" make their first communion in a holy man-
" ner; those, the dispositions they were to
" bring to a general confession, of which he
" had given them the idea; to many he told
" (which is more astonishing) in what manner
" they were to behave in order to overcome a
" rising passion or troublesome temptation....
" His discourses were so animated, so power-
" ful, that they captivated every heart: they
" were as a seed well nurtured, which, cast
" into good soil, produced in it by little and
" little a hundred fold. A young man from
" Dieppe, whom the finest qualities introduced
" to the world in the most flattering manner,
" that is to say, who had all that he need
" have to succeed in the world and lose his
" soul in it, had the happiness to know Bou-
" don, to enjoy his company, to form a tender
" and intimate connection with him. In his
" school, and by his example, he discovered

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" and acknowledged the danger of the world; " he conceived that horror of it, which is in- " spired by a true and solid virtue; he gene- " rously renounced it, and became a model of " piety in religion. Another repeated a hun- " dred times, that it was in consequence of his " lessons that he devoted himself to the ser- " vice of his neighbour in the seminary of " foreign missions*. Indeed, added he, no- " thing is more wonderful than the grace he " had at that early time of moving all hearts: " nothing more calculated to make an impres- " sion on those who heard him, than his love " for Jesus Christ, the tender and only object " of his affections: the object which was ever " returning upon his discourse, and of which " he was never tired of speaking." What an eulogium, my dear Theotime! Why did not I merit such an one in my youth? What ought you not to do in order to merit it in yours? But let us follow yet farther the steps of young Boudon. What follows is the account given by his latest historian†.

" All these children, boarders and others, " for they had several who lodged elsewhere, " began by placing themselves under the spe- " cial protection of the Blessed Virgin. They

* This latter was named M. Fermanel, and was superior of this famous seminary. The other was named Gallié.

† Vie de M. Boudon, liv. i. p. 46 in the first edition, and 26 in the second.

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" had a small oratory in the house, where they
" met together every day to render their ho-
" mage to this Queen of angels. It was with
" them a subject of holy contest, who should
" give her the most magnificent praises. Her
" glory and her greatness were the invariable
" objects of their conversation during their
" meals and recreations. Their burning hearts
" beheld with sorrow the moment arrive which
" put an end at once to their conversation and
" their praises. They employed a part of the
" little money they received from their friends,
" in adorning her images, and burning per-
" fumes before them; they employed the rest
" in procuring the celebration of the august
" sacrifice of the altar, to obtain of God a por-
" tion of the graces with which he crowned
" her. Their sweetest pleasure was to visit
" the churches and chapels consecrated to the
" Son under the invocation of the Mother.
" Sometimes on recreation days, they unco-
" vered their feet outside the town, in order to
" make these pious pilgrimages with more
" fervour. At other times, and very frequent-
" ly, seized with the spirit which animated
" David and his lyre, they filled the air and
" the echo with her praises. As they were
" several in one room, they awoke in the
" night to sing hymns in her honour. It was
" impossible, without being sensibly affected,
" to behold these amiable youths rising long
" before day, that they might not miss her
" office on the days of the congregation, &c."

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Thus it is, Theotime, that a young student procures the favour of God. Thus it is that he draws down the dew of heaven on his little labours; and in a short time, he does it in a manner so sweet, so easy, so consoling, that he would believe that he did it by nature alone, if he did not feel that grace works with him.

VI. To convince you still more and more, I beseech you to consider with me, that to be entirely devoted to God, a young man has nothing more to do than what he does every day, provided he will do it well. Let us follow, through the course of one single day, two scholars who live in the same college: you will see that the one who edifies the whole house, does nothing more exteriorly than the one who scandalizes it. You will see indeed that the latter, who has the misfortune to lose his soul, takes much more upon himself than the former, who sanctifies himself from day to day, and is saved.

The bell for rising rings in the morning. A virtuous scholar obeys the first sound of the bell, as the voice of God. Scarcely has he risen from his bed, when he thanks his Lord for having preserved him during the night; he offers him his heart, he begs him not to permit him to be so unhappy as to offend him during the day. In these pious sentiments he dresses himself, and ever with the greatest modesty, whether he is alone, or in a common dormitory. If he has some moments to spare before the public prayers, he gladly turns them

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to profit. He enters the chapel with as much eagerness as the shepherds felt to go into the stable of Bethlehem. There he gives his sweetest and most precious moments to the infant God, who reposes there day and night to receive our homage. He offers him life for life, or at least love for love.

Thence he goes with his comrades to the place of the public exercises of devotion. The spirit of love and recollection which he has just acquired at the feet of his divine Master, follows him thither and accompanies him there. Immoveable as a statue, concentrated within himself, or rather in God, the sole object that engages his attention, he does not lose any part of the public prayer. He disclaims beforehand those troublesome distractions, of which we are never masters. He drives them away carefully as soon as he perceives them. He humbles himself profoundly, when they have surprised his vigilance; and he finds even in his drynesses the materials of a sacrifice, which has its value before God.

Betaking himself very speedily to the place of study, which he considers after prayer his most important obligation, he rapidly raises his heart towards the holy mountains, to draw down the help which he stands in need of. He neither looks who comes in, nor who goes out: he sees nothing but his book, and he studies it with reflection. This it is which forms all his pleasure, because this is all his duty.

Very far from absenting himself from Mass



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upon frivolous pretexts, he does not even find, in the most lawful reasons, sufficient motives to dispense with himself. But in what manner does he assist at it? As he would have assisted at the sacrifice which Jesus Christ made of himself upon Calvary, if he had been present. He is not only modest, he is annihilated in the presence of a God, who is ready to immolate himself for love of him. He does not forget that the powers of heaven, the heavens themselves, and all the virtues of them, tremble in his presence, who at the voice of the minister will descend upon our altars. He follows this sacred minister in his principal actions. With him he confesses, at the beginning of the Mass, that he is a sinner, and that he is so purely through his fault, and his most grievous fault. With him he unites himself to the heavenly spirits, to sing to the Man-God that canticle of praise with which they filled the air at the moment of his birth. With him he makes acts of faith at the gospel, acts of self-devotion at the offertory, acts of the most tender and respectful adoration at the two elevations, acts of supplication at the *Pater*. With him, in fine, he communicates spiritually, when he cannot have the happiness of doing it in reality. He humbles himself at his weakness which deprives him of this advantage; and he is only comforted by the hope of making fresh efforts to repair his loss.

In class he is attentive to all that his professor says, respectful and obliging towards his

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fellow-students, sensible to the humiliations of those who have deserved them, always ready to deliver them when he has it in his power. By such conduct he is a comfort to his masters, and softens the rigour of the painful toil to which they are condemned. Thus he merits the affection of all those of his comrades, who have any inclination to virtue: and thus does he insensibly gain over those, who at first held virtue in abhorrence.

During meals he listens to the reading which commonly takes place in the refectory in well regulated houses, persuaded that a young man has always many things to learn, and that a trait of history which strikes but feebly to day, may be very serviceable at a future time. He does not laugh, and still less does he exult at the gross blunders of a careless or awkward reader. He is particularly watchful that sensuality may not enter into an action, which is very much exposed to the danger of it. However frugal may be the fare of the place where he lives, he almost always finds out the secret of sacrificing some little. Since a cup of water, given in the name of Jesus Christ, has its reward, he concludes unnoticed that half a glass of wine retrenched must have its recompense also. Above all, he leaves to others, and principally to those who have fared the worst at their own tables, the low and unbecoming practice of finding fault with every thing that is set before them. If a delicate constitution could not take it, it would be pro-



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per for a boy, without breaking out into ill-placed complaints and murmurs, to inform his parents. But in a few weeks we become reconciled to many things. A captain and his company of soldiers would often make good cheer over the leavings of a schoolboy.

In time of recreation he is as cheerful and as amiable as he appears serious during the rest of the day. Sweetness and sober enjoyment attend his steps. He never appears but with those graceful looks, which gained St. Francis of Sales the hearts even of those who thought they had a right to hate him, because they hated his religion. He carries compliance as far as he can do without implicating his conscience. He amuses himself with a child, as he would do with a more advanced youth. He gives him a little piece of advice without seeming to touch upon it. He plays less through inclination, than to comply with the wishes of others; and at play, as at every thing else, he is always attentive to decency. Familiar conversations which are commonly so dissipating, and oftentimes so dangerous, become to him a source of merit. He banishes far from them cold equivocations, false reports, indecent tales, and every thing that can wound charity, which is a virtue as easily wounded as purity. If after reasonable attempts he sees the evil still continue, he gives notice to those who are able to apply a remedy.

The rest of the day is spent like the morning; that is to say, that after having given to

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nature the relief and recreation she requires, our student returns to labour with fresh vigour. If he interrupts it from time to time, it is to give his heart to God; and this practice, which must be renewed from hour to hour, at the striking of the clock, is well calculated to procure for him the graces of which he stands in need.

The day concludes with prayer and the examination of conscience, which must form the better half of it. He humbles himself at the faults he has had the misfortune to commit during the day, because he is very weak; but he is humbled without being discouraged, because he has to treat with a God who knows the slime of which his creature is formed, and who is always full of mercy. He makes new resolutions of serving him with more fidelity. He goes to bed as he rose in the morning, with the strictest modesty. He implores our Lord again to disperse the troublesome phantoms which might trouble the purity of his heart. Piety even knows how to turn wakefulness in the night to advantage. And if he does not go so far as, like the royal prophet, to arise in the middle of the night to sing the praises of the Lord, he easily contrives to say to him with that virtuous prince: "I willingly in-
" terrupt my sleep to give myself to thee, O
" my God. My soul, inflamed with thy love,
" sighs after thee alone. I desire to bless thee
" in every moment of my life. I rejoice to see
" my repose interrupted, because I have the



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" happiness to entertain myself with thee, and " may this first thought be the forerunner of " similar ones for the return of the morning.— " *Si memor fui tui super stratum meum, in ma-* " *tutinis meditabor in te.*" Ps. lxii.

VII. This plan, my dear Theotime, presents you with nothing extraordinary, nothing but what a student does, and is even obliged to do in a well regulated college. You will find in it, nevertheless, a fruitful source of sanctification to a young man who follows it with piety. Cast your eyes upon his neighbour who thinks of nothing less than of God, and you will find in him a source of demerit, and perhaps a beginning of reprobation.

The bell awakens him as it does the rest, but he never fails to give his first moments to the demon of indolence. He leaves his bed at the latest extremity. He neither thinks of God, nor his saints. A sign of the cross would cost too much, he never makes one. He hastens half-drest to the place of public prayer. By turns he falls asleep, and talks if he can; in a word, he does every thing but what he ought to do. The prayer of the publican is very little: *O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner*; but he will not say it, or if he should, it will be only with his lips. Such is the prelude of his day: the rest exactly corresponds with it.

He has always a thousand things to do before he begins to study, and as many falsehoods ready to excuse himself in case of a reprimand for idleness. At length, without

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addressing a word to God, or even thinking of him, he takes up his book; he lays it down, and takes it up again. His eyes wander in every corner of the place; he is never better pleased than when he can communicate to some other his dissipation and mortal indolence. It is in this manner that he learns his lessons, or performs his duty.

I say nothing of the manner in which he hears Mass. It fills every one with horror who retains any sentiments of piety. The least noise makes him turn his head. His eyes rove about from object to object, and never fall upon that which should alone occupy his attention and his homage. You would say that he had already lost all faith. This much is certain, that in one sense he has less faith than the evil spirits, since they believe and tremble; whereas this unhappy scholar is insensible to the presence of Jesus Christ, that is, of his Master and his Judge, who is very near him. Senseless mortal, he does not think that when the sacrifice which is offered upon our altars, was offered for the first time upon Calvary, the earth was shaken to her foundations, the rocks burst asunder, the astonished sun withheld his light, and all nature was thrown into disorder. This great spectacle, which even now astonishes the Powers of heaven, is not able to make any impression on a young man of ten or twelve years of age. *Obstupescite cœli super hoc, et portæ ejus desolamini vehementer.* Thus however does he hear Mass.

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even on those days when it is of obligation. And hence you will infer, by the way, that if there were nothing worse in him, he is in the habit of mortal sin; because to hear Mass ill, and not to hear it at all, is the same thing; with this exception, that he who does not hear it at all, does not go to insult God in his very sanctuary.

It was my intention to continue to the end the parallel between our two students. But, Theotime, afflicting truths are sometimes more painful to him who details them, than to those who have deserved to hear them. Besides, you easily conceive that a young man, that is so little devoted to God, as he whose portrait I have just been sketching, is as sensual at table as he can be, and that he denies himself nothing but what is out of his power to grant himself. You may conceive that he is rough and haughty in time of recreation, passionate in the most innocent games, inconsiderate in his words, always ready to detract either his masters or his companions, and still more ready to hold or listen to that licentious discourse which discovers a heart prematurely corroded and already radically corrupt.

VIII. It is then true that while a scholar, who is devoted to God, finds in his daily exercises a source of peace and sanctification, a wicked scholar finds in them only a source of sin. I may add, that he finds in them but too often a beginning of reprobation. This dread-

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ful word made you shudder the first time you heard it. But, Theotime, it is exactly true. And why? the reason is in two words; it is that generally the wicked have great difficulty in correcting themselves*; and that, in particular, there are no sinners who find it more difficult to return into the right path, than those who have deviated from it in their tender youth. *Adolescens juxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab ea*†. This truth had passed into a proverb in the time of Solomon. The pagan world acknowledged it‡; the experience of every age has confirmed it. We see, and by the most deplorable of misfortunes we see but too many young men, who, after having lived a long time in the practice of piety, fall by little and little, and abandon themselves at last to dissoluteness. But we find an infinitely smaller number, who, after having forsaken God almost from their childhood, return to him entirely and sincerely. Their evil habits grow stronger with their years. Their crimes penetrate to the very marrow of their bones. They keep even under grey hairs all the vices of their youth; and these vices, which are become a second nature, will follow them even to the obscurity of the tomb: *Ossa ejus implebuntur vitiis adolescentiæ*

* Perversi difficilè corriguntur. *Eccles.* i. 15.
† Proverbium est: adolescens, &c. *Prov.* xxii. 6.
‡ Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu. *Horat.*

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*ejus, et cum eo in pulvere dormient**. To awaken them from their lethargic slumber, would require that alarming trumpet, which shall one day awaken all the dead. It would require, at least, a Monica on one side, and an Ambrose on the other. But are they commonly to be met with in these days? I know that the last century has found in Bernard and Queriolet†, that is to say, in two men, who had made a very bad beginning, models of the most rigorous penance. But I know too that the one and the other of them owed their conversion to nothing less than real prodigies, and that prodigies are graces upon which it would be the height of imprudence to depend.

I wander insensibly from my subject, my dear Theotime; forgive it for my grief, forgive it even for my fear. Hitherto you have pursued your little career in a saintlike manner;

* *Job.* xx. 11.

† Claude Bernard, surnamed the poor priest, became more humble than he had been worldly in his youth. He kissed the feet of prisoners, conducted them to execution, and assisted them with unbounded patience and charity to their last breath. It was he who founded the seminary of the thirty-three. He died on the 25th of March, 1641. He has a kind of mausoleum to charity.

Peter le Goüello de Queriolet, counsellor in the parliament of Brittany, after having long been a monster of fury and horror, became a model of penance, and such penance as would make us shudder. He died the 8th of October, 1660.

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but what an affliction would it be to me to see you alter your conduct! My bosom cherishes a fonder hope: *confidimus de vobis meliora et viciniora saluti, tametsi ita loquimur.* God who is faithful, will not abandon a child who has always been faithful to him, and who would shed his blood like water rather than violate his law.

*Prayer.*

YES, my God, I will study for thy glory; and henceforth the desire to please thee shall be the only motive of my trifling exertions. Thou art the absolute master of success. Whether it be great, or small and moderate, I resolve to refer it only to thee, and I will thank thee equally for it. What would the most splendid talents avail me; what would the vastest erudition one day profit me, if I had the misfortune to abuse them, as those pretended heroes of profane antiquity did, and as so many proud philosophers do even now, who become vain in their thoughts*, who lose themselves in their false reasonings; in a word, who know all, except thee, O my God, who art the way, the truth, and the life. Ah! my Lord, permit me to ask of thee in the way of science, what one of thy greatest servants prayed for in the way of fortune†: give me

* Evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis, et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum. *Rom.* i. 21.

† Mendicitatem et divitias ne dederis mihi; tribue tantùm victui meo necessaria. *Prov.* xxx. 8.

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in this kind neither a painful indigence, which would render me useless to my neighbour; nor an abundance which might make me proud, and would thereby only serve to my destruction. But whatever may be my success, I offer it to thee entirely, and I offer myself together with it. I will give to study all the time which I ought to give: but I will give more willingly still to exercises of piety all the time that can be dedicated to them. Thou art my God in every moment of my life! but thou shalt be doubly so in those which are more particularly destined for thy worship: *Deus, Deus meus.* Every day will I offer thee as soon as I awake that morning oblation which is so acceptable in thy sight. I will assist at the public prayers with the strictest decorum. By the help of thy grace, my tongue shall be only the interpreter of the sentiments of my heart. I will redouble my attention during the august sacrifice, where thou again vouchsafest to immolate thyself for love of me. I will not lose a drop of the precious blood which thou sheddest there for me. Even recreation, that recreation which has so often been fatal to my innocence, shall become to me a source of benedictions. I will never become connected but with those who love thee, or whom I may be able to engage to love thee. Bless, O Lord, these resolutions with which thou art pleased to inspire me this day. Support my weakness with thy all-powerful hand. Alas! if thou dost not build the

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edifice of my salvation, I can make but weak efforts to raise it*. If thou dost not watch for the safety of Sion, she will quickly fall beneath the strokes of her enemy. Holy Father, make haste to succour a poor feeble youth, who is the work of thy right hand. Only Son of God who didst redeem the world, break asunder the chains which still bind me to it. Comforting Spirit, come and establish thy abode in my heart. Purify it from its stains. Water it with those salutary streams which fertilize the most barren soils. Heal thou its wounds. Make it worthy of thyself; and make it only beat and only breathe for thee: *Lava quod est sordidum: riga quod est aridum: sana quod est saucium. Amen, Amen.*

## CHAP. II.

*A good Student should employ his Time well.*

We hardly begin to know the value of time before we come to rather an advanced age. A thoughtless youth, imagining that he sees before him a long train of years, and giving himself up at all times to the torrent of his own giddiness, passes away days, weeks, and very often even years in a fatal inapplication.

* *Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam.* Ps. cxxvi.



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He looks upon those moments as lost, which he has not been able to consume in trifles. Every serious occupation is tedious to him. Little but the fear of being reprimanded will make him move; and though by the aid of a happy genius, it sometimes happens that he succeeds tolerably well, he hardly ever succeeds as well as he might have done: very often even he makes none or very little progress. For the rest he is easy as to his condition; and if happily, which is very rare, he avoids certain faults which are a disgrace before men, he does not think he has much to reproach himself with before God.

It is, Theotime, to combat this pernicious prejudice that I am about to shew you that a student, who loses his time, violates all the laws of justice, and that his condition, even if he had nothing more grievous, ought to give him the most serious uneasiness in the sight of God. I say, if he had nothing more grievous; you will soon see that this word is not useless.

I. Yes, my dear son, a scholar who loses his time, who devotes one portion of it to talking with any one who will listen to him, another to running about without any object, to tedious trifling in his room, &c. such a scholar becomes unjust towards God, unjust towards his parents, unjust to his professors, and unjust to himself. Do not apprehend that I am going to fatigue you by a long discourse: I shall say but one word upon each of these four articles. To propose them is

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enough to establish them. Whoever does not see them at the first glimpse, must have that deeply darkened heart, with which the Scripture so often reproaches the enemies of the Lord*.

II. I say in the first place, that a student, who does not employ his time as he ought, is unjust towards God. The reason is quite obvious; it is, that he has only given it us to make good use of it. Each one of us is, in relation to this sovereign Master, what the fig-tree planted in his vineyard was to the householder spoken of by Jesus Christ†. He had placed it there for nothing but to gather fruit from it. As soon as he finds none upon it, he has a right to cut it down to the roots, and substitute another tree which will not deceive his expectations. If sometimes his anger is suspended, it is only for a time, and this time he does not always grant.

You have a great and terrible example of this in one of the most alarming parables, which is proposed to us in the gospel. A man, says our Saviour, being on the point of setting out on a journey, called his servants, and placed his property in their hands. He gave to one five talents, to another two, and to the last one; to each according to his abi-

* Obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum. *Rom.* i. 21. — Obscuratum habentes intellectum. *Ephes.* iv. 18.

† St. Luke xiii. 6, et seq.



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lity. The two first doubled the sum which had been entrusted to them, and received from their master, when he returned, the praise that is due to labour and fidelity. The third appeared in his turn: he excused himself upon the ground of the fear he had of succeeding ill, and thereby incurring the indignation of a master whose severity was well known to him. But this iniquitous excuse drew immediately upon him these fulminating words: "Wicked "and slothful servant, you knew that I was a "severe man; you ought then to have made "every effort to turn my money to profit. It "is by your own confession that I judge you "and condemn you. Let his talent be taken "from him, and let this unprofitable servant "be cast into the exterior darkness. There "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*." I confess, Theotime, that this indolent servant was very culpable, and the formidable decree pronounced against him is an invincible proof of it. But I would venture to affirm, that of all those students, who are in the habit of losing their time, there is hardly one who is not much more culpable than he. For in fact, he did not employ the deposit committed to his care, either in gaming, drinking, or shameful excesses; he hid it carefully, he returned it all. An idle student is very far from being in so favourable a situation. From the moment

* Inutilem servum ejicite in tenebras exteriores: illic erit fletus et stridor dentium. *S. Matt.* xxv. 30.

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that he does nothing, it is in a manner impossible that he should not do a great deal of evil. *Idleness*, says the Scripture*, *is the mother of every vice.* It is from her, as from a poisoned spring, that arise contentions, detractions, impure desires, and by little and little, sometimes even very rapidly, the most shameful excesses. *You ask me*, said a certain person, *how such an one became an adulterer? The reason is not difficult to discover, it is because he had nothing to do*†. When we can find no time for good, we always find enough for evil. *Ecce hæc fuit iniquitas Sodomæ, superbia.....et otium ipsius et filiarum ejus*‡. It is true therefore that an unfortunate student, who loses his time, is unjust towards God. I will add, that he is unjust too towards his parents and friends.

III. There is no one who does not consider as guilty of injustice a son, who robs his father of his property. The Scripture formally declares it§, and the thing speaks for itself. But is it not then true that a child robs his family of their property, when he employs it contrary to their most just intentions, when he squanders it in a worthless manner, and

* Multam malitiam docuit otiositas. *Ecclus.* xxxiii. 27.

† Quæritur Ægidius quare sit factus adulter?
In promptu causa est, desidiosus erat.

‡ Ezechiel xvi. 49.

§ Qui subtrahit aliquid a patre suo, et a matre, et dicit hoc non esse peccatum, particeps homicidæ est. *Prov.* xxviii. 24.



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makes quite a different use of it from what is required of him? He is placed in a college. A pension is paid for him, which, though moderate in itself, is still very heavy considering the badness of the times. He is provided for in a decent manner. To supply all his wants, a father must retrench many things which could not be considered as superfluities. Oftentimes even is he obliged to bear the burden of the day and the heats. His brothers, his sisters, in the hope of a just return, make their respective sacrifices for him. Every one puts himself to inconvenience in order to make him comfortable. They imagine that he labours as much for himself as they labour for him. They expect a visible improvement at the end of the year. He announces it himself in all his letters. If you believe him, if he is not the phœnix of his class, at least he is very near it. But the case is far otherwise. *Misopon* is perfectly indifferent. He does nothing, and as far as he can, he hinders others from doing any thing. To-day he has an engagement which cannot be put off: to-morrow he is indisposed. He is only active when engaged in diversions. Some words of Latin caught, as it were flying, make up all his erudition. With these he imposes upon others who know still less than himself. If this be not deceiving his parents, and deceiving them in a very serious matter; if this be not squandering away in trifles the money which they only gave for serious necessities, I no longer know what

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may be called cheating and imposture. If sometimes a father is deceived, whose eyes are veiled by a blind tenderness; at least there is no deceiving that ever enlightened Judge, who weighs every thing in the rigorous balance of the sanctuary.

IV. I added that a student who does nothing, commits an injustice towards his professors. Were a field capable of reason, there is no one who would not consider it very culpable, if after having been cultivated with all possible care, it failed by its own fault to yield the labourer the fruit which he had a right to expect from it. Upon this principle it is, that God so often complains in the Scripture*, that his vineyard, notwithstanding all the attention it had received from him, had produced but very bad fruits. Take great care how you proceed, you are deeply concerned in this parable. You have a master, who labours from morning till night for no other purpose than to instruct you in every way. Sometimes he gives you lessons of piety; and often takes advantage of a word with which a pagan author furnishes him, to lead you to God. At other times, and this is his most ordinary occupation, he gives you lessons of science; and whatever certain persons may think of them, these lessons always cost him a good deal, because he wishes to do them well. It is for you that he

* Quid debui ultra facere vineæ meæ? *Isai.* v. 4, *et seq.*

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reads the best Latin authors, that he unfolds the sense of them with strength and precision; that to accommodate himself to your narrow capacity, he contracts his own. It is for you that he undergoes with his class the rigour of the seasons, the cold of winter, the heats of summer. It is for you that frequently, regardless of his weak health, he talks with animation for three or four hours in the day. The principal return he requires of you, is that you should correspond with his exertions, and sweeten their bitterness by the comfort he will feel to see you profit by them. You promise him this when he admits you into the number of his scholars, and surely he would not have received you, if you had declared to him at first, that you were resolved to lose your time. Is it not then true, that, in spending it unprofitably, you violate the laws of gratitude and justice? If any thing more odious were wanted, we should find it but too plentifully in a bad student. When he neglects his duty, he neglects his God; and he that neglects God, makes no scruple of disregarding men, and even those men to whom he has the most just obligations. And thus there are few scholars more untractable, more given to cabals, more brutal, if you can forgive the expression, than those who do nothing and are determined to do nothing.

The most provoking thing is, that the ignorance of this bad scholar is sometimes laid to the account of his master. A father, who

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sees his neighbour's son make rapid progress, and his own, who does not absolutely want genius, improve but very slowly or not at all, believes insensibly that it is less his fault than that of his professor, that causes such a prodigious difference between the one and the other. He perhaps will not be unreasonable enough to dispute his having sufficient capacity; but he will be sufficiently so to say, at one time, that he has not the method of teaching; at another, that he confines himself to a small number of favourites, and that he neglects those who have not the good fortune to please him. Poor father, you are much deceived: you ought not to compare one teacher with another; you should compare your son with your neighbour's. It is the eternal indolence of the one, and the constant application of the other, which should form the subject of the parallel.

V. As this motive, although very well calculated to affect a man who has any feeling left, will not move or will hardly move a wicked student, I proceed to propose to him another which should make the greater impression upon him, as it concerns him directly and personally. I say then that a scholar who mispends his time, is unjust to himself, because he dishonours himself in this world, where his ignorance exposes him to contempt; and he loses his soul in the other, where to be a reprobate, it is enough to have been an unprofitable servant.

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That an ignorant man disgraces himself in this world, that he falls into contempt, that sensible people will hardly see him, is a fact of which experience will allow of no doubt. And what is a man good for, who is eternally talking nonsense, who passes for a stupid fellow when he keeps silence, and more stupid when he does not? A man, whose intemperate knowledge is confined to discoursing of good cheer, and too often to speaking of his criminal excesses? His continual fooleries become proverbial, and are repeated fifty years after his death. What is more lamentable, is that this man possessed of some fortune, looks out for a settled state of life. By means of money and intrigues, he becomes all that he desires, except that he never becomes capable of his employment. The idleness and indolence, of which he has contracted a habit, every where attend him, and he never overcomes them. In his finances he lets himself be led like a blind man; and he only sees what a foreign and oftentimes a mercenary eye sees for him. In the magistracy he decides at hazard, or rather by favour, which is the only light which he is able to perceive. What then, great God! if through patronage, and sometimes by a false examination, he should be rash enough to enter the ecclesiastical state! Under shelter of a tonsure, which he should blush to wear, he would discover the fatal secret how to pamper himself with the property of the sanctuary. He would pass in the eyes of flesh and blood for a

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fortunate mortal*, whilst in the eyes of God he would only be an object of abomination. He would die at last as he had lived, in sloth and all the vices which are inseparable from it. Just Heaven! what a life, but also what a death! And is the sovereign Judge too severe, when he condemns the unprofitable servant to weeping and gnashing of teeth? I will say no more, Theotime. What I said in the preceding chapter will suffice to instruct you, and is more than enough to make me tremble.

If you ask me in what consists the good employment of a student's time, and what means he must make use of to employ it to the best advantage, it will not be difficult for me to give you, on that subject, some precise and salutary lessons.

VI. To employ every moment well, a student has but three objects to accomplish: to do what he ought to do, to do it well, and to do it in its time. His obligations in general are reducible to exercises of piety, study, and suitable recreation. Let him pray when he ought to pray, and go to it with all his heart; let him not lose one of those moments which he ought to give to labour; let him not give to study, nor even to prayer, the time of lawful recreation. This little relaxation is necessary for him, and when it enters into the

* Beatum dixerunt populum cui hæc sunt; beatus populus cujus est Dominus Deus ejus. *Psalm.* clxiii. 15.

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regular order of duties, it is more pleasing to God than an arbitrary and misplaced devotion. But I should be wrong to enlarge upon this point. The taste for pleasure, and the spirit of dissipation which reign but too much among young people, have sufficiently provided for it. The best that I can do, is to admonish them to accustom themselves early to follow the regular routine: or if they remain with their parents, to make for themselves a uniform plan of life. The first days only are painful. When once a person has taken a good turn, he preserves it almost naturally. If he does not always act with the same facility, because the mind is not always raised to the same pitch, he uses violence to make himself always act with the same exactitude, because the exactitude of one day produces that of another. *I rise*, said a wise religious man, *I rise at midnight, even when I have sufficient reason to be dispensed with; because the next day I might dispense with myself without reason: in a word, I rise to-day that I may rise to-morrow.* The fact is, that the more we yield to nature, the more does nature crave our complianee.

VII. As to the means which a student may and ought to use, to employ his time well, I reduce them to three. The first, on which I have already spoken, is to offer himself to God in the morning, together with his labours and every part of the day which he is still pleased to grant us, and which he grants us only for his glory. He must also renew this

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offering several times in the day, and especially when the clock strikes. I need not remind you that it is a very good practice to join the Mother to the Son. The honour which is paid to the blessed Virgin, does honour to him to whom she is indebted for all her greatness.

VIII. A second means is to humble yourself before God, immediately after you have had the misfortune to do any thing that displeases him. Sin recalls, in some measure, the good intention you had at first to labour for him alone. For this reason a great saint of the last century never began his office without making an act of contrition. Such an act is not difficult to make, and God, who never rejects a heart sincerely humbled, receives it, as the Scripture says, *in the odour of sweetness.*

IX. In fine, the last means the most capable of mollifying the heart, if it is not entirely perverted, is to think that, at the moment I am speaking to you, there are in hell some millions of students and others, who are there only for having lost their time. Ye vast portals of the abyss, darksome dungeons, eternal and irremediable abodes of the reprobate, did you but open to our eyes, we should behold in you a multitude of unhappy victims, whose sole regret is the ill use they made of time. What is become of you, *exclaims each one*, whither are you gone precious days of which I never knew the value? A single one of your



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minutes could have procured me the glory for which I was created; and now an eternity of groanings, an eternity of regret, cannot obtain for me what the shortest, the fleetest of your moments might have procured. *Quis tribuat mihi, ut sim juxta menses pristinos!* Just God, terrible God, wouldst thou but grant me a single one of those days which I have so unworthily prostituted, I would exhibit to the affrighted world an example of a penance still more dreadful, if it were possible, than that which I suffer here! I would join the night to the day to repair my loss; and very far from finding time for evil, I should never find enough to do good. But no, it is all over: the exterminating angel has sworn it by him who lives for ever and ever, he has engaged his word: there is no more time for me, nor any hope of being able to obtain any. *Juravit per viventem in sæcula, quia tempus non erit amplius.* Apoc. x. 6.

Here, Theotime, I pause: you will find reflections in your piety which you would not find in my feeble words; and here indeed is no place for words but bitter tears. Well, my son, can you believe it? these tears so just, so calculated to appease Almighty God, a wicked student will not shed. Unfortunately, if they are not shed at the time when they would be so salutary, they must be shed in eternity, where they are utterly unavailing.

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*Prayer.*

WHAT a lesson for me, O my God, and how alarming are these last words! Ah! henceforward I shall know the full value of time; I will turn it to profit, and will employ it only for thy love. Forgive, O Lord, the deplorable abuse I have made of it till this day. Forget the ignorance and the wanderings of my early years*. Drawn aside by bad example, and still more by my passions, I had never seriously thought that thou cursest, in the gospel, one barren fig-tree†; that it is only by a special favour, that thou givest to another a respite of one year, to see if thou art better satisfied with it: and that still more rigorous with a servant whose fear had made him unprofitable, thou dost cast him without any hope of return into exterior darkness. What would have been my condition, O my God, if thou hadst treated me in this manner? Alas! I did not stop at unprofitableness. I have but too much experienced, and I confess it this day, that idleness and sloth are the mothers of an infinity of disorders. My resolution is taken, O Lord. From this moment I tell myself, and will repeat to myself all the days of my life, that time is a signal favour of thy bounty; a grace which Jesus Christ thy

* Delicta juventutis meæ, et ignorantias meas ne memineris. *Ps.* xxiv. 7.

† St. Matt. xxi. 19. and St. Mark xi. 13.



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Son has merited for me by his blood; a grace which he refuses when he judges it expedient; a grace which, once lost upon earth, is not to be found again in all eternity. It is resolved then, O my amiable Saviour, all my moments shall, with the help of thy grace, be employed as thou wouldst wish me to employ them. I will give to prayer those which are especially consecrated to it. I will give to study those which belong to it. My days shall be full; and there shall not be a moment for sin, because thou hast given to no one time to commit sin*. But, O Lord, weak as I am, surrounded by enemies, and sometimes by friends more dangerous even than enemies, what can I do, if thou dost not powerfully assist me? Do not refuse me the assistance I stand in need of. Confirm my steps, dissipate my languor; support me in those moments when I see what is good, without having courage to undertake it. Grant that I may perfectly understand, and execute with fidelity this maxim which I had never yet thoroughly studied. Work while it is day: there will come a miserable night, when it is no longer possible to work. *Dum tempus habemus, operemur bonum .....venit nox quando nemo potest operari.* Gal. vi. 10. Joan. ix. 4.

* Dies pleni invenientur in eis. *Ps.* lxxii. 10. Nemini dedit spatium peccandi. *Eccles.* xv. 21.

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## CHAP. III.

*A good Scholar must respect all his Masters, and obey them with great Exactness.*

*Obey those who are placed over you, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account for your souls *:* this is the law and the motive of the law. It does not regard the faithful Hebrews alone, to whom St. Paul delivered it: it regards, by the same reason, all those whom Providence has submitted to the guidance of others. I say then to you, my dear Theotime, or rather I say to all, under your name, who run the same career as you do; obey those who are charged with your education. Superiors, prefects, masters, spiritual directors, all have a right to your submission. And why? Because they are obliged to watch over you, and must one day render an account of your soul. Let us endeavour to penetrate the meaning of this sentence: if we understand it well, it will appear to us even alarming.

I. Those who take care of you, watch over you; and they watch as being to answer

* Obedite præpositis vestris, et subjacete eis. Ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri; ut cum gaudio hoc faciant, et non gementes: hoc enim non expedit vobis. *Heb.* xiii. 17.



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one day for your salvation. Were you entirely strangers to them, they perhaps might say, with a prophet: *We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed: let us forsake her**. But from the moment you are once under their direction, and your parents have placed you in their hands, and this kind of exchange has been accepted by God, they become responsible for all your proceedings. The day and the night fall under their charge. At the judgment-seat of God, their soul shall have to answer first of all for herself, but she shall also be responsible for yours. You may perish, but your blood will be demanded of them. *Sanguinem vero ejus per manu tua requiram*†. Such is the weight of their duty. Your studies, your exact attention to the duties of religion, all fall under their charge. Your recreations are pastime to you, they are little better than a penance to them, because then is the time when they must redouble their vigilance. Such are their duties; but these duties impose similar ones on you. Every thing is reciprocal between the shepherd and the flock confided to his care; and if the salvation of the pastor's soul depends on his pointing out to his sheep the road they ought to follow, the safety of the sheep also depends on their hear-

* Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata: derelinquamus eam quoniam pervenit usque ad cœlos judicium ejus, &c. *Jerem.* li. 9.

† Ezekiel iii. 20.

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ing him with submission. A prefect, or a president, who relax through weakness, are much to be pitied; but is not a scholar far more pitiable, when it is his excessive indocility which obliges them to relaxation? I mentioned above, that at the judgment-seat of God, the soul of the master shall answer for that of the scholar; it is easy to see, by tracing up the principle, that the soul of the scholar shall answer in her turn for that of the master. The master loses patience, he feels disgusted; he does wrong, he should cry out to the end, and raise his voice as a trumpet*: but it is the pupil who has disgusted him by the obstinacy of his character, and made him lose all patience.

Continue then, Theotime, to respect your masters, and to follow the holy impressions which they give you. Do not wait for their orders, anticipate them. *Sit nutus pro imperio:* let even their suggestions be to you as commands. This is the way to spare them, as well as yourself, a heavy responsibility; but it is the means of procuring for you as well as for them, true peace, solid consolation, and a treasure of virtue.

II. I say true peace and solid consolation. Is it not very charming to a young man to see himself cherished by all his masters; always to meet with a smile from their countenances;

* Clama, ne cesses; quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam. *Isa.* lviii. 1.

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to know that he makes them amends in some degree for the pains they take to no purpose over many others; to see that he is never reproved for his slight offences but with great delicacy and tenderness, because they are attributed to the simplicity of his age, rather than to a want of good will. Is there a joy more pure to him, than that of finding, when he returns to the house of his parents for the vacations, that the esteem of his masters, and the good accounts they have given of him, have arrived before him; that a tender father returns thanks to heaven for having given him so virtuous a son; and that his neighbours propose him for a model for their children? Theotime, in such flattering circumstances, there is no danger but from self-love. But a student who is obedient, tractable, and docile, has less to fear on that ground than any other, because his obedience, which is to him a source of peace, proves to him at the same time a source of virtue. You are sensible, my dear child, of the importance of this last proposition. I could prove it to you by a great many reasons. I confine myself however to two, which will appear to you as solid as they do to me, if you only give them a little attention.

III. The first, which is very general, and may serve any other as well as yourself, is that God commonly gives a blessing to obedience. Obedience, said a prophet to the first king of Israel, is more agreeable to the eyes of the

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Lord, than all the victims which could be offered to him*. The reason is quite obvious: it is, says St. Gregory, that in offering victims, we only sacrifice other flesh, whereas by obedience we sacrifice our taste, our judgment, our ideas, our repugnances, in a word, our own will. Therefore God has always recompensed this virtue in the most splendid manner. The Old and New Testaments furnish you with incontestable proofs. It was in virtue of his obedience, that Moses, after having passed forty years in the desert, delivered his people from the most humiliating, the most cruel servitude that could be imagined. It was by obedience, and by the most painful obedience, that Abraham went out of his country, and transported himself, filled with grief, to the top of a distant mountain, to immolate Isaac; that is to say, an only son, who was the foundation of his sweetest, of his most glorious expectations. It was by obedience, and by an obedience perhaps still more generous, that this son, to whom God had not intimated his orders, placed himself upon the pile, and bowed his head beneath the stroke which was to sacrifice him. But it was likewise by the same obedience that they both deserved to be the stock of a people as numerous as the sand which lies on the sea

* Melior est enim obedientia quam victimæ. 1 *Reg.* xv. 22.

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shore, and in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

But why recur to distant examples, whilst we have a domestic one, in the person of that God-Man, who is pleased to call himself our brother *, and who is so indeed in the most excellent manner. I will say it then, and the whole earth shall hear my words, without daring to contradict them; obedience was the great virtue, the favourite virtue of Jesus Christ. That is to say, that though he possessed them all in the same degree, it was this which he most constantly and sensibly practised. If he descends from heaven to be born in a stable, and to converse with men, it is because it is written of him in the head of the book of the eternal decrees, that he shall faithfully accomplish the whole will of his Father†. If he spends his youth in humiliating obscurity, and his latter years in an ungrateful and painful ministry, it is because his Father has sent him, and he regulates all his motions solely by the orders which he has received from him. In fine, if he dies by the most ignominious of punishments, it is because the will of his Father must be accom-

* Primogenitus in multis fratribus. *Rom* viii. 29. Non confunditur fratres eos vocare. *Hebr.* ii. 11.

† In capite libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam. *Heb.* x. 7. *ex Ps.* xxxix. 8, 9.

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plished, and not his own*. But, Theotime, and this is the point I wished to come to, how well was his obedience recompensed! Jesus Christ, says the Apostle St. Paul, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, and even to the death of the cross. But it was for that very thing that God exalted him, and gave him a name, which is above every name; so that at the name of Jesus, all that is in heaven, on earth, and in hell, humbly bows the knee, and falls down to adore. Thus it is that obedience is crowned, and that, according to the expression of the Holy Ghost, he who practises it, sings at last his own victories to the name of him by whom he has gained them: *Vir obediens loquetur victorias.* Prov. xxi. 28.

IV. A second reason which should nourish and fortify in you the spirit of obedience, is that those to whom I exhort you to pay it, command you nothing but what is lawful, nothing but what tends to your good. It happens but too often, that those who are in office abuse their authority, by giving orders which injure at once both reason and religion. In these melancholy circumstances, the lowest servant has no other course to take, than that of resisting them to their face; and however lowly his condition may be, he can and he ought to say, as two great apostles said to

* Verumtamen non sicut ego volo; sed sicut tu. S. *Matt.* xxvi. 39.

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reprobate pontiffs: *If it be just in the sight of God, to hear you rather than God, judge ye**. For our part, it is to his law that we desire to adhere; and his commandments shall be always the inviolable rule of our conduct. Thanks to the mercy of our Lord, a scholar has nothing to fear from these shameful excesses in a well regulated college. The lessons he there receives, tend solely to inspire him with a horror of vice, a love for virtue, modesty in his behaviour, caution in his words, purity and innocence of manners, the avoiding idleness and bad company, assiduity in labour, and the means of sanctifying it, &c. Now in all this, there is nothing but what is just, nothing but what is a source of grace and merit to him, nothing but what should make him love God and men†, render his company precious to those who esteem virtue, and one day draw down blessings both upon his memory, and the memory of those who have educated him in so holy a manner.

V. I will not conceal from you, that the docility which I require of you, is sometimes painful to nature, and that the fund of pride which we have inherited from our first father,

* Petrus vero et Joannes respondentes ad eos (qui erant de genere sacerdotali) dixerunt: Si justum est in conspectu Dei vos potius audire quàm Deum, ipsi judicate. *Acts* iv. 19.

† Dilectus Deo et hominibus····cujus memoria in benedictione est. *Ecclus.* xlv. 1.

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and which even the saints feel it difficult to shake off upon earth, feel from time to time great repugnance to obey. But, my dear son, where would be the merit, if there were no combat? Jesus Christ, whose example I have just been proposing to you, Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith, did not behold without fear the chalice which was prepared for him. He desired, he asked with redoubled entreaties, that it might pass from him. His desolation brought him to so violent an agony, that there issued from his body a sweat of blood, with which the ground was drenched. A student will never be put to such trials by his masters. Perhaps divine Providence has others in reserve for him, which are scarcely less afflicting. He cannot to-day foresee its designs; but he can from this day accustom himself to break down his own will, and bend it without murmuring to the will of another. Whichever way he turns, he must always obey. The state can only subsist by the just subordination of the members who compose it. The religious is obedient to his superior, the priest to his bishop, who, in the time of contagion, sends him to attend the sick in a place where pestilence and death exhale all their fury; the soldier obeys his captain, who is himself obedient to his general; and this last to the king, who is himself much to be pitied, if he does not obey God and the laws.

This is perhaps much less than need be said



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for others, and much more than you stand in need of, to whom God has given that docile heart which Solomon requested of him*, and which would have made of him the best of kings, if he had always preserved it. Nevertheless, I think it a duty to tell you further, that you may obey without any merit, and that obedience, in order to be agreeable to God, requires certain conditions. The masters of a spiritual life require five principal ones. I will run through them briefly.

VI. The first is, that it be simple, submissive, and in some measure blind. None, therefore, of those curious examinations, of those restless researches into the nature of the command, the reasons which our superiors had in giving it; the mean trick which some evil minded or jealous person has played us; or the false reports which he has spread against us. Oftentimes there is no truth in any of these: our superiors wish to try us, and that is all. Begin by submitting: obey like Abraham, obey like St. Joseph. The former does not represent to God how hard it is for a father to slay with his own hand an only son. The latter does not say to the angel who orders him to retire into Egypt, that it is surprising that he is banished to a barbarous nation, at all times hostile to the children of Israel; that he has neither provisions nor conveniences for so long a journey, &c. They

* Dabis ergo servo tuo cor docile. 3 *Reg.* iii. 9.

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both set out at the first order. You know how fortunate were the consequences of their obedience; it would be superfluous to repeat them.

VII. From this first condition there results a second; it is, that obedience should be prompt. The patriarch Joseph could scarcely be ignorant of the ill-will of his brethren against him: nevertheless, as soon as Jacob had charged him to go and learn news of them, he set out without delay. It is true, that he was near being the martyr of his obedience; but it is true also, that he was well indemnified. In general, says St. Gregory, a man who knows how to obey perfectly, knows not how to delay obedience, nor to seek for reasons to be dispensed with*. If you think you have lawful reasons, you must expose them ingenuously to those who direct you. They know full well that they are debtors to the weak as well as to the strong; and they are too reasonable not to listen to you when you ought to be heard. In the third place, obedience must be voluntary, affectionate, without ill-will, without bitterness, without interior murmuring. A slave obeys, but he does it only by compulsion, and against his will. He avoids chastisement, which is all he wishes, and all he obtains. A child obeys from the bottom of his heart; love renders sweet to

*Nescit judicare quisquis perfecti didicerit obedire. *S. Greg. in 1 Regum, lib. 2. cap. 4.*



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him what otherwise is most painful. He desires to please, and he succeeds in pleasing. The Lord, says St. Paul *, loves a man who gives cheerfully. Who can doubt, that by a similar reason he loves him who places all his joy in obedience?

VIII. It is further necessary, that obedience should be pure; that is to say, that we must obey with the sole view of pleasing God, and not with the desire of pleasing men. This is the important lesson which St. Paul gave to those of the faithful in his time, whose condition placed them in a state of dependence. Servants, said he to them †, obey your masters according to the flesh: obey them with a respectful fear; obey them as Jesus Christ himself; and that not only when they are mild and humane, but even when they are angry and of a difficult temper ‡. Do not be obedient only when they see you. He who only serves the eye of his master, cannot long be faithful: but obey them as persons who wish to do the will of God, and who regard

* Hilarem datorem diligit Deus. 2 *Cor.* ix. 7.

† Servi, obedite Dominis carnalibus cum timore et tremore, in simplicitate cordis vestri, sicut Christo; non ad oculum servientes, quasi hominibus placentes, sed ut servi Christi, facientes voluntatem Dei ex animo. *Ephes.* vi. 5, 6.

‡ Subditi estote in omni tremore Dominis, non tantum bonis et modestis, sed etiam discolis (seu pravis et asperis). 1 *Pet.* ii. 18.

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him with reason as their greatest master. There is but one word, Theotime, to be changed in this great maxim, and there would be still less if you considered yourself, with the apostle, as the servant of all those with whom Providence ordains that you shall live.

IX. Finally, a last condition of a holy and perfect obedience, is that it should be universal, as well in regard of the object, as of the persons whom you ought to obey. Obey in all that is not opposed to the law. Obey all those who have a right to command you. Obey in all things. Saul defeated Amalek, made him a prisoner, and was himself condemned, because he had spared his life, although he had received orders to sacrifice him to the just anger of the Lord.

Obey all those to whom God has given a certain superiority over you. Obey your pastors, and the Church, of which the Holy Ghost has entrusted them with the guidance. *He that heareth you, heareth me,* said Jesus Christ to his apostles, and in their persons to all those who were to succeed in their places: *and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, as well as him that sent me**. Obey those from whom you received your life. He that curses his father or his mother, is deserving of death be-

* Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit. Qui autem me spernit, spernit eum qui misit me. *Luc.* x. 16.



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fore men *: he who, by disobedience, imbitters their days, is deserving of death before God. Obey those who have the care of you. Were they only common servants in your house, the moment your parents invest them with their own authority, you cannot disobey them without disobeying your parents. Obey your masters at college; follow their advice, even when you have left college. Those who have preserved you in innocence during a number of years, will perhaps be so happy as to call you back into the right path, if you have had the misfortune to go astray. In fine, obey your confessors, but obey them scrupulously. You have no friends more tender, more sincere, more alive to your interests. They are strangers to the humours, the caprice, and the ill-judged partialities which spare one at the expence of another. They are yours in health and in sickness. They rejoice at your little victories; they are afflicted at your falls, without ever being discouraged. They support you, when you are on the point of making a false step; they raise you up again, when, notwithstanding their advice, you have had the misfortune to fall. Give them in return some part of the tenderness which they feel for you, and if they could seek any thing but God, they would find themselves amply rewarded.

* Qui maledixerit patri suo, vel matri, morte morientur. *Exod.* xxi. 17. *Levit.* xx. 9.

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*Prayer.*

YES, my God, henceforth I will consider it one of my most indispensable duties, to be perfectly docile, humble, and respectfully obedient. I am sensible that my pride and a fund of independence will often thwart my endeavours, and press me to shake off the yoke. But, O Lord, I will carry it entire, I will stifle all the motions of nature, I will follow only the impressions of grace and of thy love. The slightest intimation from those to whom thou hast entrusted me, shall be to me an irrevocable command. I will suffer in peace and silence the humiliations which may befal me; and my only regret in suffering them, shall be that of having deserved them. I will not obey the eye only, nor will I obey in order to please men. I will obey solely to please thee, O my God, and to imitate afar off that Son who is the eternal object of thy good pleasure, and whose deference to thee made him obedient unto death, and even to the death of the cross. Ought I then, my Saviour, to have followed till now a path so distant from that which thou hast marked out for me? Ah! I detest with my whole heart my former wanderings; I resolve to renounce them for ever. Break asunder, O Lord, this fund of rebellion, which is grown as it were natural to me. Grant me, like Solomon, a pliant spirit and a docile heart. But let my docility and my obedience extend in general to all those who have a right to re-

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quire it. Let me be insensible to their failings; may I only see in them the authority with which thou hast invested them over me. Jesus, Son of the living God, Jesus, victim of obedience, have compassion on my misery. Support me in the way which I purpose to enter upon. I entreat thee, by thy languor, by thy agony, by thy passion, by that bitter chalice which thou didst drink to the dregs, and thou didst only drink to accomplish to an iota the entire will of the eternal Father. *Jesu obedientissime, miserere mei. Jesu obediens usque ad mortem, per mortem tuam libera me.*

## CHAP. IV.

*A good Scholar should live on good Terms with his Fellow-Students, lead them to God, &c.*

I. PEACE is one of the most precious goods that man can possess on earth. It was always the object of the ambition of the wisest princes, as war, and the horrors which it draws after it, were the subject of their most rational fears. The threats which God denounces upon me are terrible, said a king who had a little forgotten himself by a motion of pride: but, may his name be blessed, let his severest will be accomplished, provided that truth and peace reign with me as long as I myself reign.

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*Bonus sermo Domini.....sit pax et veritas in diebus meis.* 4 Reg. xx. 19*.

The Son of God also, who knew better than any one how to value real goods, seems to include them all in the inestimable good of peace. *I give you my peace,* said he to his disciples, *I leave you my peace. Not as the world giveth it, do I give it.* The peace of this false, inconstant world, is as false and inconstant as itself. I give it you for ever. You will have to suffer: but you will possess your souls in peace, and the union which shall reign † among you, shall sweeten your greatest bitterness ‡.

II. It is upon these principles, as immoveable as the truth from which they emanate, that I exhort a student to live on good terms with every one, and particularly with his fellow-students, who are his ordinary companions. It often happens, that in a class

* Ezechias had shewn all his treasures with complacency to the ambassadors whom Berodach, king of Babylon, had sent to him. The prophet Isaias came to announce to him on the part of God, that all those riches would one day be a prey to the Babylonians. It was on that occasion that this prince exclaimed: *Bonus sermo Domini, &c.*

† Hac loctus sum vobis, ut in me pacem habeatis. In mundo pressuram habebetis.--In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras. *Joan.* xvi. 33. *Luc.* xxi. 19.

‡ Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima. *Isai.* xxxviii. 17.

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few enough in number, there are found some of all kinds. There are some who, brought up in the country, are in the beginning almost as rude as the lowest peasants of their village; there are others who have had the most fashionable and noble education. There are some clever; others very middling. There are some to whom God has given what the Scripture calls *a soul truly good* *; that is to say, who are naturally peaceful, mild, and compassionate; there are others whose character is harsh, violent, and passionate, and who take fire at a mere trifle. In a republic so divided in inclinations and sentiments, there is need of great prudence, circumspection, and good management; and these virtues are still more necessary for those whose disposition is hasty, and who quickly lose patience. They, however, as well as all others, ought to endeavour to live in peace with every one. It is this peace which a student should seek after, which he should cultivate, which he should maintain, whatever it may cost him, provided his innocence does not suffer †. Without this, he will have no repose, either from his masters or his companions, from his conscience, or from God, out of whom however, there is neither repose nor tranquillity to be found.

* Sortitus sum animam bonam. *Sap.* viii. 19.

† This will be explained in the following chapter, which treats of bad company.

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III. He will have no repose from his masters, who will every day receive complaints either from him or against him; who will consider him as a turbulent subject, and will be right in their judgment; who will habitually believe him culpable, because he is accustomed to be so.

IV. He will have no peace from the companions of his studies. It will be with him as with the wild and savage Ismael. He will be ever ready to come to blows, and others will be at least as ready to deal them to him. His hand will be against all, and the hand of all will be against him*.

V. He will have no rest from his conscience. Whenever her voice can be heard, she will reproach him with his haughty sensibility, which hinders him from bearing any *thing*; the fire of his anger, which the smallest spark enkindles; the trouble which he continually causes in a house, which lived in peace before his time; the severity with which he resents a word spoken unawares, sometimes even spoken solely to oblige him. If a man of discord were capable of entering seriously into himself, could he possibly endure himself?

VI. But whether he can or cannot endure himself, it is very certain that God will not

* Hic Ismael erit ferus homo; manus ejus contra omnes, et manus omnium contra eum. *Genes.* xvi. 12.

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endure him, and that he has no peace to expect from God. The God whom Christians serve, is not a God of dissension, but of peace and charity *. He loves neither noise nor tumult; *non in commotione Dominus.* It is from the midst of a soft and tender zephyr that he makes his voice to be heard, and it is by pacific souls alone that he permits it to be heard. These he calls his children †, and to these he promises a distinguished place in his kingdom. For an opposite reason, he curses a child of discord, and if he does not correct himself, every one else will curse him also. Alas! when he comes to reflect upon his conduct after being engaged in some unfortunate quarrel, he will be tempted to curse himself, and to say of himself in the most rigorous sense, what Jeremias could not say of himself in his own name: *Væ mihi, mater mea! quare genuisti me, virum rixæ, virum discordiæ?...omnes maledicunt mihi.* Jerem. xv. 10.

These reasons are solid, and I trust they will make an impression, not only on such among young scholars, who follow sometimes a little too far the vivacity of their temper, but even on those whose impetuous warmth desolates colleges, and should be banished from them. Thanks be to God, the number of

* Non enim est dissentionis Deus, sed pacis. 1 *Cor.* xiv. 33. Vide lib. 2. *Reg.* xix. 11, 22

† Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur. *Matt.* v. 9.

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these last is but small. But since, however few there may be, there are always too many, I am going to propose to them some new motives which may be of service to both. Here are two or three which appear most worthy of truly Christian youths. I say but a word or two upon each.

VII. The first is, that a young man who lives on good terms with his comrades, has in the first place, the great advantage of always enjoying around him a profound peace. He has no share in the changes that take place in the scene before him. He is like a man who sees two armies in battle from the summit of a mountain. He trembles for the danger which threatens the lives of the soldier and the officer, but he has nothing to fear from the strokes with which they are threatened. A thousand fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, and the murderous sword cannot approach him *. The sight would feed his curiosity, if humanity and religion did not inspire him with rational sentiments. You have here, but perhaps on too large a scale †, what a young man experiences who has been

* Cadent a latere tuo mille, &c. *Ps.* xc.

† *Si licet exemplis in parvo grandibus uti.* There are, however, some very serious quarrels among young people, and several have proceeded to maiming, and others even to death. See an example of the former in the life of the virtuous M. Bourdoise.



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nurtured with the milk of peace, and who knows how to preserve it even with those who are its enemies *. He sees as it were in perspective, a crowd of hair-brained fellows provoking one another, abusing and ill-treating one another. He would laugh at others folly, if his piety did not make him grieve to see God offended.

VIII. But, and this is my second motive, the virtue which animates him, the meekness which constitutes his character, the regard which is naturally felt for a man who is attentive never to fail in a sincere regard for every one; all these, supported by a prudence which accompanies the spirit of peace, combine to make of him an angel of peace. He speaks in that tone which will calm the most agitated billows. He is listened to at the very first with patience, because he is wont to be heard with pleasure. His lips drop down honey †. He is the first to offer atonement to the offended party; and a moment after, he induces the aggressor to offer satisfaction himself. They are reconciled, they embrace, and part good friends.

IX. What is still more happy, is that this spirit of peace grows stronger with age, that it subsists with life, and that it frequently puts

* Cum his qui oderunt pacem, eram pacificus. *Ps.* cxix. 7.

† Favus distillans labia tua.. mel et lac sub lingua tua. *Cantic.* iv. 11.

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a stop to quarrels of far greater importance than those of young people in colleges commonly are. A man who has loved peace from his youth makes it a principal point, or rather a pleasing habit, to maintain it every where as far as he finds it possible. He becomes in this respect, and in many others, the resource of all his neighbourhood. He conciliates minds which are at variance; he brings together divided families; he prevents those fatal and abominable duels, invented by the love of false glory *; he puts a stop to lawsuits; and, if he cannot stop the course of justice, he at least softens down the expressions of the memorials; he retrenches injurious terms, he banishes odious personalities. What good offices! are there any more glorious, more consoling? Let us repeat it once more with our divine Master: happy those who love peace, because they shall be called and shall be indeed the children of God!

X. But how is it possible to live peaceably with those who seem to have made a vow of living in contention with every one;

* It was thus that St. Vincent of Paul disarmed Philip-Emmanuel de Gondi, General of the Gallies, who afterwards entered into the Congregation of Priests of the Oratory, and died in it in a very holy manner in 1662. It was thus likewise that a poor Capuchin Friar, now the blessed Felix of Cantalicia, reconciled two unfortunate men, who were on the point of killing each other.



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with persons who make a joke of mortifying their neighbour; who insult coolly and deliberately every one around them, and of whom we may say with the Roman Poet:

*Et si non aliquid nocuisses, mortuus esses.*

XI. I did not tell you, Theotime, that it was very easy to live on good terms with every one. I allow that there are persons of a hard inflexible character, without affection, without gratitude, and of whom it may be said, as the illustrious martyr St. Ignatius said of the soldiers who conducted him to Rome, that become worse in proportion as they receive good *. But I still maintain, that notwithstanding this we must live with them in the best manner possible; and that with the aid of grace we may accomplish it. These are the means which a young man may make use of, in order to succeed in this undertaking.

1st. In his prayers in the morning, he

* De Syria usque ad Romam pugno ad bestias in mari et in terrâ, nocte dieque ligatus cum decem leopardis, hoc est, militibus··quibus et cum beneficeris, pejores fiunt. *S. Ignat. Epist. ad Roman.* This holy Bishop of Antioch was devoured by wild beasts at Rome as he had so ardently wished. He suffered martyrdom under Trajan in the year of Christ 107, and according to F. Pagi, 116. A very useless remark to a young scholar, but a very important one to a divine.

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must make a general sacrifice to God of all the little sacrifices which he will have to make to him during the course of the day; offer him the contradictions which he will have to suffer; request of him for his lips that barrier of circumspection which the Royal Prophet, otherwise so vigilant, requested for his own *. And as in most colleges it is very customary to go for a moment into the chapel before recreation, it is also very proper to renew there the resolutions made in the morning. The hour of his little combat is then advancing, he must prepare himself for it, and provide himself with the necessary arms. Those of a good Christian are faith, prayer, and especially patience †.

2d. We must be beforehand in good nature with those who, humanly speaking, deserve the least of it ‡, and do, but with an upright heart, what the ungrateful and perfidious Absalom did to seduce all Israel. The Scripture has preserved the detail of it §: let us make evil serve us for good. Must it then cost us nothing, O my God, to lose our souls and those of others; and yet cost us so much to promote thy glory, our own and our neighbour's sanctification?

* Pone Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiæ labiis meis. *Ps.* cxl. 3.

† In omnibus sumentes scutum fidei orantes omni tempore. *Ephes.* vi. 16, *et seq.*

‡ Honore invicem prævenientes. *Rom.* xii. 10.

§ Vide 2 *Reg.* xvii.



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3d. You must, and this is an article on which you cannot too much reflect, you must take no notice of the inconsiderate speeches of a youth who speaks at random, without knowing what he says, or what he means to say. If you take up a word, as, according to ordinary ideas, it should be taken up, you will draw on a second, that will bring out a third, and God will be offended. Only answer all that by a profound contempt. I am wrong, Theotime, rather reply to it, by renewing to God the sacrifice which you have made him at the beginning of the day. This is the way to put your enemy to the rout, and to disengage yourself happily and safely from the affair. For the rest, policy alone would prescribe to you all that I here recommend. In all states you must either be continually engaged in battle, or else dissemble many things. When Saul was established king of the people of God, the sons of Belial said quite loud enough to be heard; This is a new kind of king; can such a man as this encounter our enemies and deliver us from them*? It would have been very easy for this prince to answer, that he thought of nothing less than of royalty, when it was proposed to him; that he sought to decline it by reminding Samuel, that his family was one

* Filii vero Belial dixerunt: num salvare nos poterit iste? et despexerunt eum, et non attulerunt ei munera: ille vero dissimulabat se audire. *1 Reg.* x. 27.

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of the smallest of the tribe of Benjamin, and that, in fine, he had only accepted the crown, because God, by means of his prophet, had imposed it upon him. He might, Theotime, have done more, that is to say, he might have made those who despised him sensible, that if, perchance, he was not in a state to combat the enemies of his nation, he was very able to punish guilty subjects. He followed a very different method: and it is that which I propose to you. *Ille vero dissimulabat se audire.* 4th. Finally, the principal thing which I require of a scholar, is to use violence with himself in the first moments, and stop the impetuosity of his tongue. There are many whose blood rises all at once into their head, who return two injuries for one, and who applaud themselves when, by continued replies, they have reduced him to silence who had attacked them. Depend upon it, Theotime, there is no victory so fatal and so deplorable as this on which they so much pride themselves. It has been, and still is, every day, the beginning of irreconcilable hatred. When in the warmth of a dispute we have touched a man to the quick, publicly reproached him with a real and secret fault, and abused the confidence he had placed in us in the times of those indiscreet disclosures, when we think we can tell our friend every thing, it is a wound which will never close again, unless grace itself affords it a powerful assistance. Vague declarations and abusive words, cast in the air, are forgiven: they are

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considered as sallies of little consequence. But nothing less than solid virtue can forget a wound which is always deep when it is inflicted with truth. *Manet alta mente repostum; et tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus.* That, they they will say, is a dangerous man, a man who, in the excess of passion, is not master of himself, and who is capable of betraying his best friend. I grant, as I have already done more than once, that they are in the wrong, and that there is no resentment which ought not to expire at the foot of our Saviour's cross. But after all, woe to him by whom the scandal cometh! Woe to him who, by a little patience, might, if he would, have smothered the germ of an aversion, which often ends only with life! Happy on the other hand, and thrice happy he, who casting a tender look on the last hours of Jesus Christ, adores that victorious silence * with which he heard the blackened calumnies by which his reputation was branded! Happy he at least, who perceiving the emotion of his heart, betakes himself as soon as possible to retreat, and goes to rejoice before God for the little confusion which he has suffered before men. Theotime, see that you do not forget it: a young man will often repent for having spoken; he will never repent for having held his tongue.

A remedy well calculated to arrest the sallies of the tongue and all bad quarrels, is humility

* Detulit silentium triumphale. *Tert.*

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and modesty. A scholar, who thinks himself above others, and who surpasses them in reality by his genius and his facility, becomes his own idol, and erects within himself a temple to his pride. This is what renders him so sensible, I do not say to contempt, I say to a word, even an indifferent expression. He assumes at first a high and haughty tone; and as the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart, it can hardly express itself in any other terms than such as may give offence. Modesty disperses these unhappy defects. It procures for those who preserve it carefully, an esteem which goes even to veneration. You have found several examples of this in the *Christian Student:* the following is one with which you may not be acquainted; I extract it from a very recent author*.

Jerome Bignon was, almost in his infancy, a prodigy of learning. Formed by a learned and virtuous father, he published at the age of ten years, the *Chorography* or *Description of the Holy Land.* F. Sirmond, who met with him in a bookseller's shop, was so struck with the presence of mind, the capacity, and, at the same time, the modesty with which this clever scholar resolved a difficult question, that, hav-

* See the Life of Jerome Bignon, Attorney-General, by M L'Abbé Perau printed by J. J. Herissant 1757. The anecdote which he relates of him, is taken from the place where M. Baillet, in his decisions of learned men, speaks of *children celebrated for their studies.*

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ing asked his name, he returned home full of admiration. Some time after he spoke of him with a kind of transport to Nicholas le Fevre, one of the most learned men of the time; adding, to increase his admiration, that the youth in question had not appeared to him to be more than fourteen years of age. M. le Fevre, after having heard him out, replied: *What! father, are you the only man of learning unacquainted with young Bignon. You are not much mistaken in the circumstance of his age; he is an old man of eleven years, a doctor complete in his childhood. If we and he live, we shall see him without doubt the master of the wisest and most learned men of our age.*

It is not the learning of this admirable youth which I propose to you in this place; it is his modesty and his sweetness of disposition. Le Fevre associated him from time to time with the studies of the prince of Condé, whose preceptor he then was. The contest was not equal, and it was hardly possible that it should be so. On these occasions it is difficult not to feel one's superiority; and perhaps still more difficult not to let it appear that one feels it. The modesty of young Bignon always secured him from this danger. *He knew,* says his late biographer, *how to behave himself with a politeness and decorum which youth is rarely acquainted with, and much less so when it feels its own advantages.* Nor was it only because he had to do with a prince, that this youthful *old man* was so cautious in his deportment:

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he lived with every one else as he would have lived with the sons of kings. How sweet it is to tread in such noble footsteps! How glorious to follow such charming models!

But, Theotime, it is not enough for a good and holy scholar to live on good terms with all his schoolfellows; he must also endeavour to bring them to God. His mildness will contribute much to this end, because this virtue naturally prepossesses in favour of those who possess it. His good example will contribute still more to it; but his words must contribute also. The devil has his agents in every school; it is just that God should find some in them who labour for his glory. A youth, whose age, talents, or birth, give him an ascendency over others, is capable of doing invaluable good. God who perfects praise from the mouth of infants*, gives to their words a strength which astonishes even their superiors. When they join with them an air of cheerfulness, candour, and ingenuousness, and, above all, of affection, they gain the heart of every one. A slight remonstrance, seasoned with due regard towards the offender, coming from them, does more good than the serious reprimand of a person in authority: and they often obtain even what a director would not have thought of requiring. You have a fine proof of this in the example of young Boudon, which I quoted

* Ex ore infantium et lactentium perfecisti laudem, &c. *Psalm.* viii. 3.

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to you in the first chapter. I entreat you to read it again, and profit by it.

*Prayer.*

GRANT me, O Lord, that spirit of meekness and accommodation, which enables us to live in a friendly manner with every one. Grant me, as thou didst grant David, the grace to be peaceful even with those who hate peace*. I have my faults; I have more indeed than any other: I am very glad that they are borne with; it is very just then that, according to the advice of thy apostle†, I should bear with those of my brethren. Must I feel, O my God, so much repugnance to fulfil a law, which thy only Son has so ably taught me! Must I be so alive to a slight mark of contempt, to a word spoken inconsiderately, while I behold him suffering with unalterable patience the blackest calumnies and the most cruel outrages; and enduring the punishment of the cross, without regard to the confusion and ignominy attached to it‡. Alas! I continually protest to thee that I will change my conduct, and my conduct constantly belies my protestations. The

* Cum his, qui oderunt pacem, eram pacificus. *Psalm.* cxix. 7.

† Alter alterius onera portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi. *Galat.* vi. 2.

‡ Sustinuit crucem, confusione contemptâ.—*Heb.* xii. 2.

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slightest murmur awakens my self-love, and with it my sensibility also. O my God, I will make a new effort. I can do nothing of myself, I can do all things in him who strengthens me. After the example of that prince who was according to thy own heart, even when I can take revenge, I will be as a dumb man; and I will not open my mouth, either to justify myself or to complain*. With the assistance of thy grace, I will hear every thing without emotion. I will go yet farther for love of thee: I will kiss the hand which strikes me, well assured that it is thou who strikest by it. I will tenderly cherish those who shall spare me least, because they will teach me to shed my tears into thy bosom, and seek my repose and consolation in thee alone. Alas! I tremble yet at the sight of my weakness. Jesus, who art the God of peace; Jesus, who art meek and humble of heart; Jesus, who invitest me to learn meekness at thy holy school, reform my impetuous disposition. Grant that I may never return evil for evil†. Grant that I may one day be able to say to thee, with the royal prophet: If I have ill-treated those who have done me evil, I consent, O Lord, that thou treat me with all the rigour of thy justice‡.

* Factus sum sicut homo mutus, non habens in ore suo redargutiones. *Psalm.* xxxvii. 15.

† Nulli malum pro malo reddentes. *Rom.* xii. 17.

‡ Si reddidi retribuentibus mihi mala, decidam merito ab inimicis meis inanis. *Psalm.* vii. 5.



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Ah! were I to say so this day, I should pronounce my condemnation. I propose to watch so carefully over all my steps, that when I say it at a future day, I may deserve to be treated by thee with mercy. *Jesu Deus pacis, Jesu mitis et humilis corde, miserere mei.*

## CHAP. V.

*A virtuous Student must fly evil Company, and whatever may separate him from God.*

THERE are two things particularly injurious to youth, idleness and bad company. I have spoken of idleness when treating of the good employment of time; it is just that I should here speak of evil company.

I. I am willing then that a young man should be friendly with every one; but I wish, at the same time, that he may be so only as far as the altars, *amicus ad aras*, that is to say, as far as he can be without exposing himself to the danger of offending God. Now nothing is more able to separate him from God than bad company. It only required an Arius to infect a large portion of the east; a Luther to seduce whole provinces; a Calvin to rob the Church of millions of the faithful who were living peacefully in her bosom. What an innovator does by heresy, a scholar and every other corrupted character effects still more

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easily by the contagion of his morals. The inclination to error is not so universal, but that there have always been true Catholics, who, in spite of the persecutions of such as Valens* and Henry 8th, have constantly said with St. Jerome† : " I neither know Paulinus " nor Vitalis. I am attached to the chair of " Peter. I know that upon this rock the " Church is built, and that the proud gates of " hell shall never prevail against her." But the relish for sin, and especially for sensual pleasures, is so lively, so predominant, so extended, that there is no one who need not apprehend becoming a victim to it. Man, says the scripture, is decidedly prone to evil from his youth‡. The way of virtue is to him a slippery path, in which he cannot keep his

* Valens grievously persecuted St. Basil, Meletius, and all the defenders of the divinity of Jesus Christ. After having lost the famous battle of Adrianople against the Goths, whom he had infected with Arianism, he was burnt alive in a peasant's hut, where he had fled for protection, the 9th of August, 378.

† Ego cathedræ Petri communione consocior: super illam petram ædificatam ecclesiam scio. Quicunque extra hanc domum agnum comederit, profanus est....Non novi Vitalem, Meletium respuo, ignoro Paulinum. Quicunque tecum non colligit, spargit. *S. Hieronymus, Epist. ad Damasum, tom. 4, part. 2, pag.* 19.

‡ Sensus et cogitatio humani cordis in malum prona sunt ab adolescentiâ suâ. *Genes.* viii. 21.



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ground without the most attentive vigilance. The way of vice, on the contrary, is only in his eyes, a broad and smiling road strewed with flowers. If of his own accord he is carried towards it with such impetuosity, how will it be with him when he is urged on by another, and to his own natural inclination is added a foreign impulse perhaps more violent than his own? How will it be, in a word, when the tempter, to the contagion of words, shall join the too effectual contagion of bad example?

II. It is at the prospect of the danger resulting from this accursed evil company, that the scripture ceases not to forbid it. With this view it forbid the Israelites to marry strange women, not doubting that they would seduce them by degrees, as it happened to Solomon, who, from the wisest of kings, became the most senseless of men, and whose salvation is even at this day a problem as alarming, as it is difficult to resolve. With this view again it every where repeats to us to avoid the wicked, and break off from them entirely. If you know a sensible man, it says, a man who fears God, attach yourself to him in heart and affection*; for he who walketh with the wise, shall

* Cum viro sensato assiduus esto, quemcunque cognoveris observantem timorem Dei. *Eccles.* xxxvii. 15.—Qui cum sapientibus graditur, sapiens erit. Amicus stultorum similis efficitur. *Prov.* xiii. 20.

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become wise like them. But for the opposite reason, separate yourself from the wicked; go out as quickly as possible from their dangerous tents; carry your precaution so far as to touch nothing that belongs to them, do not even eat with them*. My son, says the Holy Ghost to us elsewhere by the mouth of the wise man†, if sinners shall entice thee by the deceitful milk of their caresses, consent not to them, walk not in their paths, because their paths end in nothing but evil, and they run towards it with fury rather than eagerness. He that toucheth pitch, says he again‡, defiles his hands with it; and he who has society with a proud man, soon adopts his air and manners. Retire then, go out quickly from the midst of Babylon§. That impure city will make you as impure, and perhaps more corrupt than it

* Recedite à tabernaculis hominum impiorum, et nolite tangere quæ ad eos pertinent, ne involvamini in peccatis eorum. *Num.* xvi. 28.—Scripsi vobis, ne commisceamini fornicariis, &c. cum ejusmodi nec cibum sumere. 1 *Corinth.* v. 9, 11.

† Fili mi, si te lactaverint peccatores, ne acquiescas eis, ne ambules cum eis, prohibe pedem tuum à semitis eorum; pedes enim illorum ad malum currunt. *Prov.* i. 10.

‡ Qui tetigerit picem, inquinabitur ab eâ; et qui communicaverit superbo, induet superbiam. *Eccles.* xiii. 1.

§ Recedite de medio Babylonis—recedite, exite exinde, pollutum nolite tangere: exite de medio ejus. *Jerem.* l. 10. *Isaiæ* lii. 11.

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is itself. Be not deceived, evil communications alter and ruin the most innocent manners*. It needs but a little leaven to corrupt the whole paste†. The grace of baptism which has regenerated you; the sacrament of confirmation, which has given you the Holy Ghost with the abundance of his gifts; penance, which in re-establishing your strength, communicated to you a fresh supply; the flesh of Jesus Christ, which, to speak the language of the holy fathers, has deified you; all these favours have made of you *children of the day*, and placed between you and the *children of night* a barrier which shall subsist eternally. What union can there be between justice and iniquity? What intercourse between light and darkness? What agreement between Jesus Christ and Belial his eternal enemy‡? I repeat it to you then, my dear child, and it is in the name of Jesus Christ that I repeat it, withdraw yourself from the society of those among your brethren, who conduct themselves in a

* Nolite seduci: corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia prava. 1 *Cor.* xv. 33. This saying of the Apostle is taken from the poet Menander, as St. Jerome remarked.

† Modicum fermentum totam massam corrumpit. 1 *Cor.* v. 6. — Omnes vos filii lucis estis, et filii diei; non sumus noctis, neque tenebrarum. 1 *Thess.* v. 5.

‡ Quæ participatio justitiæ cum iniquitate, aut quæ societas lucis ad tenebras? Quæ autem conventio Christi ad Belial? 2 *Cor.* vi. 14, 15.

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disorderly manner*. Keep at a distance from them, as you would keep off from a place where the plague was making its ravages, for fear lest a long abode with them may make you an accomplice in their disorders, and you may share with them the wounds with which they will not fail to be afflicted†.

From all these texts of scripture it clearly results, that a young man, or rather every man, ought carefully to avoid bad company, 1st, because there a man that is innocent, becomes perverted; 2ndly, because there one, who has begun to be wicked, is confirmed in his disorders; 3dly, in fine, because we cannot fail to share the fate of the wicked, when we are connected with them.

III. Rely not then, Theotime, either upon your virtue, or upon the natural horror you feel for certain excesses. There is only need of one or two weeks, what do I say? it often needs but a single day, and sometimes even less, to shake the edifice which we thought the most solidly established, and overturn it from top to bottom. Let us hold by experience: nothing in the world is more decisive.

Alipius, so celebrated in the confessions of

* Denuntiamus vobis, fratres, in nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ut subtrahatis vos ab omni fratre deambulante inordinatè. 2 *Thess.* iii. 6.

† Exite de illa populus meus, ut ne particeps sitis delictorum ejus, et de plagis ejus non accipiatis. *Apocal.* xviii, 4.

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St. Augustin, had naturally an extreme horror of those cruel spectacles, where the Romans took a murderous pleasure in seeing the effusion of human blood. Some young friends of his, who were studying the law like himself, having once fallen in with him accidentally, undertook to take him to the amphitheatre; they took hold of him with that sort of violence which friendship authorizes. He said to them on the way: "You may force my body, "and place me amongst you on the steps of "the circus; but will neither dispose of my "mind, nor my eyes, which will assuredly "take no part in the spectacle. Thus I shall "be there as if I were not present; and by "this means I shall be above the violence "which you offer me, and the passion which "enslaves you."

In spite of these protestations, Alipius was dragged to the spectacle, and while the whole amphitheatre was abandoned to these barbarous pleasures, Alipius forbid his heart to take any part in them, and kept his eyes shut. And would to God, says St. Augustin, to whom we are indebted for this account, that he had kept his ears shut also; for having been struck with a loud cry, which some extraordinary event excited in the assembly, curiosity gained the upper hand of him, he opened his eyes, and that was enough to inflict in his soul a far more deadly wound, than that which a combatant had just then received. Thus it was that this heart, where there dwelt much

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more presumption than strength, and which was the more feeble as it had depended only upon itself, instead of confiding in God alone, was in a moment grievously wounded. Cruelty crept into it at the sole view of the blood just shed; and very far from turning his eyes away from what was going forward, he kept them fixed upon it, drinking down ferociousness by long draughts without perceiving it, and letting himself be inebriated with this bloody and criminal pleasure. It was no longer the same man who had been dragged thither by force; it was a man of the same temper as all those who composed the assembly, and a worthy companion of those who had brought him there. He went out at length, but with so much ardour for those unfortunate shows, that he breathed nothing else; and not only was he ready to go again with those who had led him thither, but he even conducted others.

After such a relapse, continues St. Augustin, what could help him to rise, but the hand of thy mercy, O my God! And this alone effected it; and thou didst teach him no more to confide in any other than thyself, and never to depend upon his own strength: but it was not till long after. However, he preserved ever after the bitter recollection of this adventure, which, while it called to his remembrance his past weakness, served him as a preservative against future frailties*.

* Confess. St. August. lib. vi. cap. 8.

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Thus Alipius was indebted to false friends and his own presumption for a long train of faults; for it was an enormous one to encourage by his presence these bloody spectacles, which equally wounded humanity and religion. It was thus that St. Teresa also, notwithstanding the relish she had for virtue, having become acquainted, after the death of her mother, with a female relation who was fickle and giddy, became so much changed, that the happy natural disposition, which every one had so much admired, began to be no longer recognized in her. It is true that Alipius and Teresa returned into the good path, which they had forsaken. The latter, because her father, who was a wise man, seeing the decline of his daughter, placed her in a convent, where a holy society repaired the evil which company had occasioned: the former, because *the mercy of God* was pleased to *raise him up again*. But do not deceive yourself, Theotime: the signal graces, which restore life to the dead*, are not granted to every one. Time itself, out of which there is no more grace, is often denied them by one of those judgments which are as terrible as they are equitable. Of this here are two new examples. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*†, and let him meditate still more.

* It is not said that St. Teresa went as far as mortal sin.

† Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat. *S. Matt.* xiii. 9, *et alibi sæpius.*

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The first is related by the celebrated Gerson*, who had taken it from Thomas of Catimpre, who, from a religious of the order of St. Dominic, became suffragan bishop of Cambray. This latter relates, that being a young scholar, he had formed an intimate connection with a youth of family, who possessed in a high degree all the virtues to be wished for in a young man. Happy had he been if he had preserved to the end this precious treasure of innocence! But by a misfortune too common to persons of his age, he fell into the company of a wretch abandoned to the most shameful passions, who enkindled in his heart the impure fire which devoured his own. From that time he was found to be nothing but a dreadful libertine, who no longer knew any bounds, or any regard to persons or times. Surprised and afflicted at so sudden and astonishing a change, his friends and Thomas of Catimpré with them, and more than they, pressed him tenderly, and conjured him to re-enter into the good path which he had left. They spoke in vain; their prayers, their tears, were unavailing. God spoke in his turn, but he spoke in that voice, the sound of which

‡ John Charlier, surnamed Gerson, from the place of his birth, was chancellor of the university of Paris in 1395, and died at Lyons on the 12th of July, 1429, aged 66 years. Thomas of Catimpré or Cantipré died about 1280.

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is more terrific than thunder*. One night, as he was in a deep sleep, he was seized with a mortal alarm, which awakened him, and made him cry out in the most horrible manner. The whole house was in motion, they hastened to his relief, they enquired what was the matter, but he only answered by fresh cries. They send for a priest, who exhorts him to think on God, and ask pardon of him for his sins, but it was all in vain. This holy pastor redoubles his earnestness, and joins tears to the most moving words. The dying youth, agitated already by all the fury of the devils, casts his wild and ghastly eyes upon him, and exclaims in a lamentable voice: *Wo be to him who seduced me! It would be in vain to invoke the help of God; I see hell opened to receive me.* A moment after, turning on the other side, as if to preclude any further exhortations, he expired in all the horrors of despair, and began in this world the cruel career which he was about to continue in the next. See, Theotime, the work of impurity, but see likewise what bad company can do.

This first example is terrible: but here follows another which will freeze the very blood

* Ecce ego facio verbum in Israel, quod quicumque audierit, tinnient ambæ aures ejus. 1 *Reg.* iii. 2, *et alibi.*

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in your veins*. I know it from its first source, and you may rely on me for the truth of it.

There was in a certain town a student, who passed with reason for a model of wisdom and piety. He frequented the sacraments, and in a very edifying manner. As he was proceeding one Sunday morning to the church, to pay his devotions as usual, he had the misfortune to meet with two of his comrades who were not near so virtuous as himself. They invited him to breakfast with them at a neighbouring tavern. He strongly declined the invitation: they returned to the attack, and he still firmly refused. They offered him a kind of violence, and he went in at length like Alipius into the amphitheatre; that is to say, he did not go, but was dragged thither. They sat down to table; he drank at first by compulsion, and by degrees through inclination. His reason was insensibly affected: a seductive object, whose only aim was to seduce, attracted his eyes. He was made to fall into sin; the husband of his accomplice surprised him, and ran him through the body. How terrible, O my God, are thy judgments! how inscrutable are thy ways †! The two companions of this unfortunate

* This fact was several times related by M. Humbert Ancelin, who, after resigning his bishopric of Tulles, retired near to St. Lazarus where he lies interred.

† Judicia tua abyssus multa. *Psalm.* xxxv. 7.



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young man, sensibly struck at so fatal an end, retired into a severe monastery which I could mention, to bewail till the end of their days the misfortune which they had had in being the instruments of it. Alas! Theotime, the tears of a whole eternity, very far from extinguishing the fire of hell, could not even diminish a single atom of its unconquerable fury.

These melancholy examples are not so rare as one might imagine. No, I shall never forget, that when I was a scholar like you, I wept over a youth at seven o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, whom I had seen on the Monday evening, and who two hours afterwards was murdered by a peasant more intoxicated than himself, in the most lamentable circumstances that could be imagined. I suppress any further detail. However useful it might be on one side, it is so frightful on the other, that a sinner like me cannot bear the idea of it. How is it then, O my God, with those who are at this moment the object and the victim of it!

IV. But who are those whose company a young man should more carefully avoid? St. Paul informs us, by those words which I have already quoted, and which are very general; "We "charge you, brethren, in the name of our "Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw your-"selves from every brother walking disor-"derly, and not according to the tradition "which they have received of us."

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V. Confining this text of the Apostle to those who trouble the peace of the Church, who trace out for themselves new paths in matters of doctrine and discipline, who condemn all that hurts their ideas; this is, in the first place, a class of persons whose intercourse could not but be very contagious to you. Thus, Theotime, when you shall find in your way some one of your friends, who, seduced either by the deceitful discourse of a pretended man of genius, or by the reading of some one of those new *philosophes*, who preach up natural religion for no other end than to annihilate all religion; or, as it almost always happens, who, by the corruption of his morals, would weaken in you those sentiments of Christianity which have been instilled into you from your infancy; diminish your just respect for the pastors of the Church; degrade them in your estimation by scandalous tales; form an argument from the irregularity of their conduct against the truths which they teach from the chair of Moses *: I say to you boldly, after the great Apostle, who said himself, in the name of

* Super cathedram Moysi sederunt Scribæ et Pharisæi. Omnia ergo quæcunque dixerint vobis, servate et facite: secundum opera vero eorum nolite facere: dicunt enim et non faciunt. *S. Matt.* xxiii. 2 *et* 3. Non ex moribus fides, sed ex fide mores pensari debent. *Tertul.* In illa cathedrâ qui malè vivunt bene loquuntur. *August.*



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Jesus Christ: avoid them as you would avoid a demon. Be inviolably attached to your holy faith. Without it you cannot please God: with it, you may move mountains; you may, as the saints have done, conquer kingdoms, shut up the mouths of lions, extinguish the activity of fire, escape from the sword and the fury of your enemies *. A subject so fine and so fertile would lead me too far. I confine myself to the reasoning which reunited Henry the Fourth to the Catholic Church: Of two sides, when we are at liberty to choose, we ought to take the surest. Now we risk nothing by choosing the side of faith. If faith does not save, as our Deists pretend, at least it cannot damn: whereas if infidelity is ill founded, it damns for eternity.

VI. A second sort of persons whose company you should avoid, are those unquiet and rebellious characters, whose conversation altogether tends to nothing, but to lessen the

* *Sancta per fidem vicerunt regna.* We see it in Josue, Gedeon, David, &c. *Obteraverunt ora leonum;* as it is related of Samson, *Judic.* xiv. 6; of David, 1 *Reg.* xvii. 35, &c. *Extinxerunt impetum ignis;* Azarius and his companions in the furnace, suspended by their faith, and by the help of an angel which it obtained for them, the activity of the fire. *Dan.* iii. 49. *Effugerunt aciem gladii;* it was thus that David escaped the pursuit of Saul, Elias and Eliseus those of Achab, Mardochai those of the haughty Aman. See the 11th chap. of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

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respect and affection which you are bound to have for your masters. A youth well brought up enters into a college, I could almost say the same of a seminary: his own natural sweetness of temper, and the lessons of a virtuous father, dispose him to honour Jesus Christ in the person of those who have the charge of his education. He has made it his chief study to profit both by their lessons for knowledge, and their instructions for piety. In a word, his greatest pain would be to cause them any pain. But how is he situated? He finds himself by the side of an indocile and discontented neighbour, who teaches him, by his example and by his discourse, to shake off the yoke; who ridicules his prefect and his masters as soon as their backs are turned: who takes a miserable pleasure in mocking them, and spreading on their person a varnish of ridicule, which however only falls upon himself; and who still more unhappily destroys as much as he can, those lessons of piety, which a master, who knows the value of a youthful heart, endeavours to implant in season and out of season *. If this detestable scholar is not yet wicked enough to censure even the gospel itself, which is announced to him, he will be enough so to render it useless, by casting contempt upon the tone, the gestures, and the manner in which it is announc-

* Insta opportunè, importunè; argue, obsecra, increpa. 2 *Timoth.* iv. 2.



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ed. Even the tears which tenderness and apprehension may draw from a zealous professor in the midst of a pathetic exhortation, will become the matter of the unworthy satire of this false wit, or rather this wretched buffoon. Fly again, Theotime, fly from a man of this character. Leave him to amuse the weak-minded and the foolish. They will know and acknowledge in time, and God grant it may not be out of time, *that the friend of a fool becomes a fool like him;* and that there is no folly more deplorable than that which degrades virtue, by degrading in some measure the word of God. However, be upon your guard; you will every where meet with persons of this character; and I could easily shew you that there are some even in the places where they ought not to be found. It is because the devil, whose instruments they are, is always better served than God.

VII. I reckon also in the number of those whose company you should avoid, those young persons who have a passion for gaming. God forbid that I should forbid you those innocent recreations which custom and necessity have established. I know that a bow always bent cannot long hold together; and that bodily exercises, when they are moderate, enliven and strengthen the youthful frame. I know too, that there are some games, which, without being made for the body, relieve the mind, recreate it, and put it in order for recommencing its serious labours. I know,

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in short, that every game not forbidden by the laws, may be adopted by an honest man. It is not then games in themselves that I condemn, but a passion for gaming; and I wish you may carefully shun all those who might inspire you with it. If ever it takes possession of you, you are lost, and lost in every sense. The love of gaming, in a week, and sometimes less, becomes madness, and this madness is the source of an infinity of evils. A gamester, says St. Bonaventure*, commits a great number of sins, such as fraud, lying, perjury, blasphemy, scandal, loss of time, and very often anger and passion. This is a great deal, and yet it is not all. A scholar who has a passion for gaming, becomes by little, and sometimes very rapidly, capable of the most degrading excesses, and even of those which be naturally held in abhorrence. He will rob his father and mother to feed his passion. He will swell out the lists of his expences. He will feign sicknesses which cost him a good deal of money. In a word, all will appear good to him, provided he lays hold of money. Do not imagine that age will abate his fury; it will increase with his years. The loss of his property and his reputation, the just reproaches of his family, the sad situation of his children, will not diminish it. It will

*In ludo multa committuntur peccata, scilicet fraus, mendacium, perjurium, blasphemia, scandalum, &c. *S. Bonav. in Speculo.*

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follow him even to the tomb, and God grant it may not lead him to a disgraceful death. By how many melancholy histories could I confirm what I here advance: but, Theotime, we become sick of the relation of horrors. I content myself with adding one thing which many will not relish; and it is, that a student, who has already the happiness of belonging to God, by being initiated among the clergy, ought not to play at cards. Although this diversion is certainly not of the highest antiquity*, it has been so often and so solemnly forbidden to ecclesiastics†, that those who have any respect left for the sacred canons, do at least very well in refraining from it entirely.

But there are no scholars whose intimacy could be more fatal to you, than those who would corrupt the innocence of your morals, and lead you into impurity. As this subject is

* It was in Italy that the game of cards took its rise, in the 14th century. A pack of cards was purchased in 1391 to amuse Charles VI. who was then out of his mind. *Longueruana*, part i. page 108.

† Prohibemus clericis et viris ecclesiasticis potissimum in sacris ordinibus constitutis, ne omnino ludant ad taxillos atque chartas. *Conc. Lerigon.* an. 1464. See several other similar decrees in the Treatise of Pastors, cha. 8. n. 13. I know what is commonly said of these old *canons*: my only anxiety is to know if this pleasantry will be as solid before God, as it appears to certain men.

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of the highest importance, and a virtuous ecclesiastic has requested me to dwell on it a little, I will give a whole chapter to it. Begin, Theotime, by entreating the Lord to render the reading of this chapter useful to you.

*Prayer.*

I HAVE no need, O Lord, of any foreign help to lead me into evil. My feet go thither of themselves*, and I have need of painful and unremitting efforts to resist the torrent which bears me down. What would be my condition, then, O my God, if to my own weakness I were to join that of others; and if I borrowed from thy enemies new strength to violate thy law! It shall not be so, and I hope it from thy grace. I will entertain, like the Royal Prophet, a holy aversion for those who hate thee†. Very far from becoming connected with him who detracts his neighbour in secret, I will oppose, as much as I can, the arrows of his empoisoned tongue‡. I will avoid walking in the way of sinners, and be-

* Pedes illorum ad malum currunt. *Prov.* i. 16. Eripe pedes meos a lapsu. *Psalm.* cxiv. 8.

† Nonne qui oderunt te, oderam perfecto odio oderam illos. *Psal.* cxxxviii. 21 *et* 22.

‡ Detrahentem secretò proximo suo, hunc persequebar. *Ps.* c. 5.

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ing found in their impious assemblies*. I desire, O my adorable Saviour, to belong to thee at whatever price it may be. I am fully sensible that I shall become a mark which no arrow will spare, and that as soon as I withdraw from the company of those who offend thee, I shall become the victim of their most violent satires. But what does it matter, O divine Jesus! the disciple is not more than the master †. If they have persecuted thee, it is very just that those who serve thee should also be persecuted. If I had the misfortune to please them, I should cease to be of the number of those who have the holy and precious advantage of belonging to thee ‡. I purpose then, and I could almost say with one of thy prophets, *Juravi et statui :* henceforward I will have no communication with any that belong not to thee. I will particularly avoid those who would diminish in me the respect and submission which I owe to the Church, and to those who have the charge of my instruction. It is thou, O my God, who in their person shall be my chief pastor. He who

* Beatus vir qui non abiit in concilio impiorum et in via peccatorum non stetit. *Ps.* i. 1.

† Non est discipulus super magistrum. *Luc.* vi. 40. —Si me persecuti sunt, et vos persequentur. *Joan.* xv. 20.

‡ Si adhuc hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem. *Gal.* i. 10.

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treads in thy steps, has neither trouble nor uneasiness to apprehend*. He who follows thee, walks not in darkness. The torch which lights him on, conducts him to life eternal. *Qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris.*

## CHAP. VI.

### *A good Student should do his utmost to preserve his Purity.*

1. PURITY is a virtue of the soul and the body, which represses unchaste thoughts, desires, and affections; which absolutely forbids gestures, words, touches, looks, in a word, every thing that can defile the heart, and induce it to yield to the filthy and shameful pleasures of the flesh. It is a virtue so delicate, that an equivocal word will make it blush, an ill-placed freedom alarms it; an air of tenderness, which bears any resemblance to passion, frightens it. Now this treasure a scholar should preserve with the most severe precautions; 1st, because it is one of the most precious goods which man can possess; 2dly, because it is at the same time a very frail treasure, and the loss of it is easy in every

* Non sum turbatus te pastorem sequens. *Jerem.* xvii. 16.

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state, in all places, at all ages, and especially in the time of youth; 3dly, in fine, because this same loss is often very fatal and irreparable.

II. I say in the first place, that purity is one of the most precious virtues which man can possess. It is that virtue indeed, which, to speak the language of St. Bernard*, places us as it were on a level with the inhabitants of that happy region, where there are neither marriages nor sensual pleasures. How happy are you! said St. Cyprian to the virgins of his time. You begin to be in this world, what we shall one day be in the other. You already possess the glory of the resurrection; since you pass through the impure clouds of the world, without having the thoughts of the world.

There is more, Theotime, and you will readily perceive it. A chaste man in one sense is superior to the heavenly spirits; because they

* Sola est castitas, quæ in hoc mortalitatis loco et tempore statum quemdam immortalis gloriæ repræsentat. Sola inter nuptiarum solemnia morem beatæ illius vindicat regionis, in quâ neque nubunt, neque nubuntur····Quid castitate decorius, quæ mundum de immundo conceptum semine, de hoste domesticum, angelicum denique de homine facit. Differunt quidem inter se homo pudicus et angelus, sed felicitate non virtute. Sed etsi castitas illius felicior, hujus tamen fortior. *S. Bernard. Epist.* 42 *ad Henricum Senon. nunc tom.* 2, *Opus.* 2, *pag.* 467.

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are by nature what he is only by dint of combats. Their purity is more happy, his is more glorious. God, moreover, has always rewarded it in the most splendid manner. To say nothing of the first of Virgins, whose purity and humility rendered her worthy to become the Mother of the Word made flesh*; it was by chastity that Judith, whose beauty opened to her view the most flattering prospects in a second marriage, deserved to triumph over Holophernes and the whole army of the Assyrians. *Confortatum est cor tuum*, said the high priest Joachim to her, *eò quòd castitatem amaveris*. It was by this same virtue, but possessed in a more eminent degree, that the apostle St. John was found worthy to be the particular friend of Jesus Christ, to repose on his bosom at the supper which preceded his passion, to recognize him on the shore, when none of his company knew him: *solus virgo virginem agnovit*, says St. Jerome. Happy then and a thousand times happy those who are clean of heart; happy those who are virgins in body and mind, because they follow the Lamb, and they are never separated from him. And what consolation, what joy to be eternally attached to the glorious chariot of him, to whom belong benediction, glory, honour, and power for ever and ever†.

* Virginitate placuit, humilitate concepit. *S. Bernard.*

† Sedenti in throno et Agno, benedictio, et ho-



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It was the thoughts of this unspeakable happiness which, in the early times of the Church, supported so many Christian heroines in the midst of the most cruel torments, who of themselves had nothing to oppose to tyrants but their weakness and their tears. From an infinite number of examples of this which ecclesiastical history furnishes, I will only propose to you one; it is that of the illustrious St. Potamiana†.

She was a virgin of great beauty, who had the misfortune to be the slave of a master abandoned to intemperance and debauchery. This man strongly solicited her, made her the most splendid promises, and joined threats to them; but he could not move her. He never drew from her any other reply than this, which means so much, and speaks it in so few words: What, my lord! do you not know that I am a Christian, and that the Christians do not commit any crime? *Christiana sum: Christiani nullum crimen admittunt.* Driven to desperation to see his advances rejected with disdain, and rejected by a maiden who was his slave,

nor, et gloria, et potestas in sæcula sæculorum. *Apocal.* v. 13.

† See the 3rd chap. of the Lausiac history, so called from Lausus to whom Palladius addresses it towards the year 421. He there relates the history of St. Potamiana after St Isidore, to whom the famous St. Anthony had related it. This illustrious virgin was martyred towards the year 204 of Jesus Christ.

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this wretched master put her into the hands of Aquila, prefect of Egypt. Her religion was the only crime of which he could accuse her; but this was one great enough at the tribunal of an idolater. Mean while as the impure fire which devoured him, was more violent than ever, he begged the prefect to spare her, in case she was at length willing to yield to his desires. Aquila, in order to intimidate her, displayed before her the instruments of several torments. But neither these frightful objects, nor the ill treatment which they made her afterwards endure, were capable of shaking her constancy. The judge, full of rage, condemned her to death, and commanded that after having stripped her, they should throw her into a cauldron of boiling pitch, unless she was willing to obey her master. "I cannot believe, "*replied Potamiana*, that there is a judge wick- "ed enough to command me to obey the cri- "minal desires of a shameless and debauched "man." The prefect, whose anger was redoubled at an answer so worthy of a Christian, commanded her to be thrown without delay into the cauldron. Potamiana begged of him, in the name of the emperor, to be permitted to be dipped by degrees, clothed as she was, into this boiling pitch, "in order," said she to him, "that you may know the patience and "strength which Jesus Christ gives me, whom "you have not the happiness to know." This was put in execution, and this illustrious virgin, after three hours of so cruel a torment,



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rendered up to God one of the purest souls which ever came forth from the hands of the Creator. See, Theotime, what it is to know the value of purity. But see also what it is to suffer with constancy to the end, in order not to give it the slightest stain. And thus it is that that sentence of the scripture is accomplished to the letter: *Pro justitia agonizare usque ad mortem.* Eccli. iv. 33.

III. In reality, there is no virtue the preservation of which requires greater efforts, or more multiplied combats. The vessel in which we carry this rich and precious treasure, is surrounded by enemies who only seek to break it; and, what is most unfortunate, is that he who is charged to keep guard over it, is commonly the first to expose it to the insults of the stranger. Every thing then conspires towards the loss of it, and this loss may become in a moment a total ruin. You have an example of this in the person of David, which has terrified every succeeding generation. His fall is so much the more terrible, as softness and delicacies had not prepared him for it, and as it led him to excesses which were neither according to his taste nor his character. This prince till then so favoured, so constantly protected by Heaven, cast his eyes by accident on the wife of an officer of his troops. Instead of turning them away immediately, and putting in practice his own lessons, where he says: *averte oculos meos, ne videant vanitatem*, he dwells upon this dangerous object. This is enough;

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his virtue abandons him, the purity of his heart is withered, he becomes a double adulterer, and spreads over his crime those odious characters, those black and dismal colours, of which so fine a soul as his had always been, appeared incapable. Look no longer for David in David, after he put on the yoke of impurity; you would not recognize him there. That prince who till then had been rectitude itself; who had twice spared the life of Saul his implacable enemy; who had always had sentiments so full of humanity, that he made bold to beg of God to remember him and his unalterable meekness*; that prince who, till that unfortunate moment, had been the model of the brightest virtues, becomes an exact model of every vice. Hypocritical and proud, he only thinks of saving his reputation before men, without thinking for a moment of repairing the dreadful scandal which he has given them. He forgets all that he has said in his psalms against treachery and duplicity. He bestows on Urias a thousand marks of tenderness, at the time that he is preparing to plunge a dagger in his bosom, if he cannot otherwise conceal his own infamy. Blind and ungrateful, he neither sees nor values the zeal of this brave and virtuous officer, who lies with the other servants at the gate of the palace, to guard the

* Memento Domine David, et omnis mansuetudinis ejus. *Psalm.* cxxxi. See the beautiful paraphrase of F. Calabre on the *Miserere.*



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life of his beloved master. Inhuman and sanguinary, he sends this generous warrior a letter, which, two days after, will make him perish by the sword of the children of Ammon. See what impurity can do in a heart, which does not take care to shut all its avenues against it. A man who once gives himself up to it, is soon no longer the same person. He is no longer a good Christian, a good friend, a good parent, a good subject. But remark also how the wisest of men falls into it in an hour, in an instant. Call to mind the tragical end of that unfortunate scholar, who was forced away by two libertines from his ordinary exercises of piety. Nothing better proves that in the matter of the precious virtue of which we are speaking, there needs only a glance of the eye to pass from one extremity to its opposite.

What is both humiliating and terrible, is that we may fall into it at every age; that we never fall more dangerously than when we give way to it from our youth; and that this fall, at whatever time it happens, is one of the most fatal that can happen to us.

IV. We may fall into it at any age. I desire no other proof of this than Solomon. God had loved him from his birth*. His wisdom was respected in the whole world. The superb

* Vocavit nomen ejus amabilis Domino, eò quòd deligeret eum Dominus. 2 *Reg.* xii. 25. The word *Solomon* signifies *peaceful.* Nathan named Solomon *Jededia*, which signifies *amabilis Domino.*

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temple which he had built, and the blood of victims which streamed on all sides of it, proclaimed the just and grand idea which he entertained of the God of Jacob. This same God had crowned him with benefits, inundated him with favours. Under his fortunate reign, Israel and Juda lived in peace, each one under the shade of his vine and fig-tree*. There was none who did not say of him, what the queen of Saba said in a transport of admiration: Happy those who have it in their power to draw at all times from the inexhaustible source of thy light and wisdom, and to listen continually to the oracles which proceed from thy mouth†! It was after this long succession of graces, that Solomon, when his head was white with age, abandoned himself to impure love. Ponder well, my son, ponder well these words of the scripture, which I could never read without tears gushing from my eyes: *cumque jam esset senex, depravatum est cor ejus per mulieres, ut sequeretur deos alienos. And when he was now old, his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods.* Solomon corrupted, is corrupted so far as to become an idolater, and even to erect to the idol of Moab a temple over

* Habitatque Juda et Israel absque timore ullo: unusquisque sub vite suâ et sub ficu suâ, á Dan usque Bersabee; cunctis diebus Salomonis. 3 *Reg.* iv. 25.

† Beati viri tui, et beati servi tui, qui stant coram te semper, et audiunt sapientiam tuam. *Ibid.* x. 8.

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against that which he had erected to the true God. I cannot cease to say it: Tremble ye feeble reeds, the cedars of Libanus have been thrown down. *Itaque qui se existimat stare, videat ne cadat**. It is the conclusion which the apostle would have drawn from such melancholy premises.

V. If it be true that we may fall into this miserable sin at every age, it is not less true that it is never more dangerous than when we fall into it from our youth. Two short reasons will convince you of the justice of this proposition.

The first, which I am furnished with by the angel of the school†, and which experience has but too well confirmed, is that impurity is an *adherent* vice; a habit of it is contracted with the greatest facility; but it is extirpated only with infinite labour, with such efforts alone as will rarely be made by those who have once the misfortune to be infected with it. Thus, as we want no other excitement but our own propensities to follow its impression; and as the hearing, the sight, and still more the heart contribute each their share in fomenting it, a child who has once fallen a slave to it, is found to be, without reflecting on his condition, in the case of those, who, as the apostle

* Wherefore let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall. 1 *Cor.* x. 12.

† Vitium adhæsivum impudicitia. *S. Thomas Aquinas.*

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St. Paul says*, have their eyes full of adultery, and a sin which never ceases. And it is not rare to find such young people, who, at the age of eighteen or twenty, may say, in the most rigorous sense, that the number of their iniquities exceeds the number of the hairs of their heads†. What a misery to be the enemy of God, to be so, so early in life, to be so for so long a time!

This last term is not strong enough. It is much to be feared, and this is my second reason, yes it is extremely to be feared that a youth, who from his early years has thrown himself into the arms of the demon of impurity, will never extricate himself. Mark well what I say; I do not say that he will not be able to extricate himself; I do not even say that he will not do it; for grace and the cities of refuge‡ have more than once served for the reparation of innocence; I say, and I shall always say, that it is much to be feared that he will never escape from his servitude. To spare the trouble of repetitions, call to mind the examples which I have already quoted to you; examples which prove but too clearly

* Oculos habentes plenos adulterii, et incessabilis delicti. *2 Pet.* ii. 14.

† Multiplicatæ sunt iniquitates meæ super capillos capitis mei. *Psalm.* xxxix. 12 *et* 13.

‡ The name which St. Bernard gives to monasteries, in allusion to the six cities where those among the Jews, who had killed a man through inadvertency, might find a refuge.

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that there are many persons to whom death does not leave a single minute to think of their consciences, and who, even if they could have it, would not profit by it. But remember in particular, and never forget that maxim as terrible as it is important: *Ossa ejus implebuntur vitiis adolescentiæ ejus, et cum eo in pulvere dormient. Cum enim dulce fuerit in ore ejus malum .....non derelinquet illud**. Job. xx. 11 et 12.

VI. But whatever may be the issue of this unhappy fall, whether a man recovers or not, it is still very certain that it is a great evil for him to have fallen. He expiates it, like David, by bitter tears, he eats his bread with ashes, he makes his couch swim with tears, he receives stroke after stroke, and always with perfect submission the most humiliating disgraces: I am willing to suppose all this; and would to God the supposition were not the most gratuitous! But after all, is it nothing to have scandalized a part of his college, and sometimes indeed the whole college? Is it nothing to have taught young children evil which they would otherwise have never known, because death carried them off shortly after? Is it nothing to have precipitated some into the abyss, from the bottom of which their blood cries louder than that of Abel, and de-

* His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust. For when evil shall be sweet in his mouth,....he will not leave it.

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mands a vengeance of a very different kind? Is it nothing to have run the risk of plunging himself into that frightful abyss? for I always return to the sentence of St. Thomas: *vitium adhæsivum impudicitia.* I grant then that a second Nathan would not say to you as the first did to David: Hear what God declares to you by my ministry: I have made you king of my people; I have rescued you from the implacable anger of a prince who sought for nothing but your destruction; I have transferred to your hands his possessions and his crown. How is it then that you have forgotten me? How have you forgotten yourself so far as to despise my law, and dishonour me by defiling your soul and body by horrors which I have always detested? But listen to what God will say to you one day, and what he this day says to you by my voice: I have caused you to be born of a family which bears a respectable name, or I have supplied the want of that advantage by other supports, and by talents which amply indemnified you. You found in your father's house domestic examples of virtue. Your parents neglected nothing to give you a holy and happy education. I have given you an opening by means of the sciences which I have refused to many others, and which demanded of you a perfect return of gratitude. If all appeared to you but little, I was disposed to do much more. By what fatality have you so soon lost the memory of so many benefits? How have you at so early a period

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consecrated to unworthy idols the first fruits of a heart which I had reserved to myself, and which I demanded of you with such earnest entreaties: *Quare ergo contempsisti verbum Domini, ut faceres malum in conspectu meo?* 2 Reg. xii. 9.

VII. These words moved David: they moved his innermost bowels; they made him pronounce that famous *peccavi*, upon which so many Christians depend, and depend with so little reason. But are there many immodest persons (forgive this word of which I have a natural horror) upon whom they will make the same impression? Far from it. The constitution is corrupted and weakened, and passion increases; it becomes a second nature. The ice of old age already benumbs the members; it does not reach to the heart; it cannot extinguish the shameful fire which devours it. The contrast which an advanced age makes with an impure flame, covers the wretch with mortal ridicule: he becomes the fable and the outcast of a whole country; he is pointed at with the finger, and is oftentimes the burden of every song, and he does not perceive it; he has made himself a harlot's forehead, and he knows not how to blush*. If conscience still speaks at times, it only forces from him a cry of despair. This is too often the last effect of impurity; and if I were not afraid of fatiguing

* Frons mulieris meretricis facta est tibi, noluisti erubescere. *Jerem.* iii. 3.

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you, Theotime, by dwelling too long on a subject, which is never treated of but with repugnance, I could shew you that this wretched vice, after having destroyed charity, often destroys faith, and still oftener hope. Weigh well this passage of St. Paul: *Desperantes, semetipsos tradiderunt impudicitiæ, in operationem immunditiæ omnis**: compare it with experience, and you will see that it may be applied to others besides the Gentiles.

I now proceed to reply to the two questions which a friend requested you to propose to me. The first is to know in what consists the precious virtue of which we are speaking, and what is its extent. The second, if the sins, which are contrary to it, are always mortal, and if they are all of the same nature. Here are my answers, but expressed in very few words.

VIII. Purity consists, in the first place, in abstaining from every outward action, which can have any appearance of evil. Every thing disturbs, every thing alarms a virtue so delicate: *Pudicitia*, says an ancient writer, *proprios veretur aspectus*. But this is not enough: it stifles in its birth even the germ of a bad thought; it represses the sallies of a lively and tumultuous imagination; it shuts its ear to every word which might excite them. *Turpitudo, aut stultiloquium, aut scurrilitas, nec nominetur in vobis, sicut decet sanctos.* Ephes.

* Ephes. iv. 19. Ibid. v. 3 et 4.



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v. 4. 2ndly, It makes us respect out brethren; it banishes for ever those familiarities which border on indecency, and are at best very unprofitable; it never looks steadfastly even at a young man, and much less at persons of another sex; it considers the eyes, with Jeremias*, as windows by which death enters, and applies to itself in a true sense what the prophet said in another one: *Oculus meus depradatus est animam meam.* 3dly, It opposes, by its modesty, its candour, and its circumspection, whatever may not be entirely innocent in the discourse of others. If it cannot stop them, it is very careful to retire as soon as possible; if it doubts whether that will suffice, it takes the advice of a wise man, and regulates itself by his counsels.

IX. As to the nature and species of the sin which is opposed to this virtue, I shall give you no other rules than those which the most learned divines have given before me. Here are some upon which you may depend.

1st. This sin is mortal and very mortal in its nature, and it is almost always so when there is, as it too often happens, a consent sufficiently deliberate. There is not ordinarily in that case any lightness of matter to extenuate. On this account it is commonly compared to perjury, simony, and similar sins.

* Ascendit mors per fenestras nostras. *Jerem.* ix. 21, *et Thren.* iii. 51.

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If the comparison is not quite correct, it is sufficiently so to alarm us.

2ndly. The exterior action is not necessary for a person to go as far as mortal sin. If a desire of revenge may easily destroy a man, an impure desire may well condemn him for eternity. This is a case of conscience which Jesus Christ has himself decided: *Whosoever*, says he in his gospel*, *looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* And St. Paul says†, *neither .....adulterers, nor the effeminate,* nor those given to other infamous passions, *shall possess the kingdom of God.*

3dly. To sin mortally in this matter, it is not necessary to go as far as the desire of committing the crime; it is enough to be pleased with the thought of it, to feed the imagination willingly with it, and to nourish it in one's heart. This is the constant doctrine of all divines after St. Augustin‡. But we must add with them, that there needs only a moment to make that evil complacency which is termed *morose delecta-*

* Omnis qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam mœchatus est eam in corde suo. *S. Matt.* v. 28.

† Neque adulteri, neque molles····regnum Dei possidebunt. 1 *Corinth.* vi. 9 *et* 10.

‡ Totus homo damnabitur, nisi hæc quæ sine voluntate operandi, sed tamen cum voluntate animum talibus oblectandi, solius cogitationis sentiuntur esse peccata, per Mediatoris gratiam remittantur. *S. Aug. lib.* 12 *de Trinit. c.* 12.



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*tion**, deserve for those who yield to it, an eternity of punishment.

4thly. In fine, this thought, even separated from the desire, is more or less criminal, in proportion as its object is more or less prohibited. Nay more, according to the best casuists, the difference of objects changes its nature. It is then a very bad way of making a confession, to accuse oneself in general terms of having had and not having rejected impure thoughts. Those whose object was a relation, a virgin consecrated to God, a person engaged in the bands of marriage, would be far more reprehensible than those who had none of these lamentable circumstances in their object, &c. Sacred ministers, priests of the God of virgins, this is the humiliating detail into which you are obliged to descend. If more advanced age does not spare you such a detail, at least it should not be necessary for tender youth. Must it then be true in our days, as in the time of Noe, that *all flesh has corrupted its way?* No, Theotime, God has still reserved for himself seven thousand Israelites, who have not bent the knee before the idol of Adonis†. Let us both endeavour to furnish them with

* Delectatio morosa dicitur à morâ non temporis, sed rationis quæ circa eam immoratur. *S. Thomas* 1. 2. *q.* 74. *art* 8.

† Reliqui mihi septem millia qui non curvaverunt genua ante Baal. *Rom.* xi. 4, *ex* 3 *Reg.* xix. 18. *De Adonide, vide Ezech.* viii. 14.

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means of keeping in the holy way, in which they have the happiness to walk. There are several, each of which may be very useful to them.

X. The first is a great diffidence in ourselves: a diffidence founded on the knowledge which each one of us ought to have of his own weakness, and on the experience which history or his own observation gives him of the weakness of others. We have already said it, and it is but too true, we carry the treasure of chastity, as well as that of faith, in vessels of clay * which the smallest shock may break, in order that always humble and always fearful, we may acknowledge that all, that is good in us, comes from God, and not from ourselves. Beware then, Theotime, of ever sleeping in the shade of your laurels, and thinking yourself secure on account of the victories which you have gained. You are not more holy than David, said St. Jerome†, nor stronger than Samson, nor wiser than Solomon. Remember that it only needed a woman to triumph over all the virtue of the first man, and banish him from that blissful abode, the sweet innocence of

* Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus, ut sublimitas sit virtutis Dei, et non ex nobis. 2 *Cor.* iv. 7.

† Nec in præteritâ castitate confidus, nec sanctior Davide, nec Samsone fortior, nec Salomone potes esse sapientior. Memento quod paradisi colonum de possessione sua ejicerit mulier. *Hieron. Epist.* 2.



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which, and the pleasures which accompanied it, were to him a paradise of delights. Believe me, *says St. Augustin*, I speak to you as a bishop, that is, as a man who can join experience to age, and who would not deceive you; I have seen men fall before the scythe of impurity, who seemed to be firmer than cedars, men whom the faithful flock considered as models of virtue, and whose lives I should no more have dared to suspect than those of Jerome or Ambrose*. Happy then he who continually walks in fear, who is always kept on his guard by a wise diffidence: this is the first, and perhaps the surest means he has of never being moved†.

A second means which is nearly allied to that of a just diffidence, is a true and profound humility. God detests pride, he resists those who are enslaved to it. He withdraws from them those powerful graces, which rescue them from the brink of the precipice, or hinder them from exposing themselves to it. Hence those alarming falls which scandalize a whole town, a whole province, and sometimes a whole kingdom. Happy still, if with salutary confusion,

* These two saints lived in the time of St. Augustin, the first in Palestine, the second at Milan, of which he was bishop. St. Ambrose died on the 4th of April, 392. St. Jerome the 30th of September, 400. St. Augustin the 28th of August, 430.

† Beatus homo qui semper est pavidus.—In æternum non commovebitur. *Prov.* xxviii. 14. *Ps.* cxi. 6.

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they enter again into themselves. For the humiliation with which their fault will cover them, is, according to St. Augustin*, a way which God makes use of to make them return to him. But besides that this way does not always succeed, and especially in youth, when they are impudent enough to form to themselves a new subject of glory of their most crying excesses; how lamentable would it be, my dear Theotime, only to return to God after having a long time cruelly insulted him!

A third means consists in overcoming the body and mortifying the senses, which always murmur till they are filled beyond what is necessary†. This is the lesson which St. Paul gave to the first Christians‡, and this lesson, if it were only a counsel with regard to other virtues, would be a precept with regard to chastity; because it is always the good plight of the body which brings on its first attacks.

The eyes then must be mortified. It is by these, as I have already said, that contagion and death enter. By these Eve was ruined, and involved all her posterity in her ruin. She cast a curious look on the forbidden fruit; she was taken with its beauty; she gathered it, eat it, and made her husband eat likewise§.

* Vide August. lib. 14 de Civ. Dei, c. 3.

† Si non fuerint saturati, murmurabunt. *Psalm.* lviii. 16.

‡ Mortificate ergo membra vestra····immunditiam, libidinem, &c. *Coloss.* iii. 5.

§ Vidit Eva lignum quod esset pulchram oculis,

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By the eyes sin entered into the world, and by them it has continued in it. The children of Seth lived in justice and innocence; their eyes dwelt with complacency on the daughters of Cain; and they soon became as abominable as they were*, and, in a short time, iniquity went so far, that nothing less than an universal deluge was required to stop it. Holophernes was an old warrior. His age, his exploits ought, it would seem, to secure him from a shameful passion. From the first moment his eyes were captivated†. Believe me, Theotime, if the prince who offered violence to Dina, if David on that unfortunate day which made so great a breach in his glory, if the two old men who sought to corrupt Susanna, had kept a strict watch over their eyes, they would have spared themselves much ignominy, and their fellow citizens many scandals and disgraces.

Job proceeded on this principle for the preservation of his innocence. This great man, who had resisted the devil, triumphed over his fury, and merited that Heaven itself should give testimony to his virtue, is so timid, so full of precautions, that he dares not cast his eyes

aspectuque delectabile; et tulit de fructu illius, et comedit, deditque viro suo. *Genes.* iii. 6.

* Videntes filii Dei filias hominum, *Cuinitarum*, quòd essent pulchræ. *Genes.* vi. 2—Facti sunt abominabiles sicut ea quæ dilexerunt. *Osee* ix. 10.

† Cumque intrasset Judith ante faciem ejus, statim captus est in suis oculis Holophernes—sardalia ejus rapuerunt oculos ejus. *Judith* x. 17, *&c.* xvi. 11.

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upon a virgin. It is because he will forbid himself even to think of one, being well persuaded that as impurity, of all the passions, is that which most disfigures in a man the image of God, so it is also that which God punishes with the greatest severity*.

To the mortification of the eyes, must be joined that of the ears. Tender airs, accents full of soft passions, loose songs, conversations in which the heart is thrown open too freely, all these only tend to wound the soul mortally. The same may be said of either reading or listening to a great proportion of plays, romances, and operas. The most frigid imagination is inflamed by degrees with such pieces. It gradually and insensibly adops their style and sentiments: and were it at first as pure and as far removed from all appearance of evil, as was that of the young Teresa, when she fell upon bad books of this kind, you may rely upon it that it will not be supported for any length of time, if God does not save it by a lively impression of his grace. But how many young people shut their hearts to his voice, because they are wholly engaged with the more powerful voice of a profane and fabulous love, which they are willing to pursue in all its branches, and whose least evil is that it carries them out of themselves, and makes them forget their

* Pepigi fædus cum oculis meis ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine. Quam enim partem haberet in me Deus desuper? *Job* xxxi. 1 *et* 2.

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own miseries. I wept, *says St. Augustin*, over the misfortunes of Dido, and I did not even think, O my God, of weeping over the sad and desolate situation in which I appeared before thee.

But it is above all in the use of eating and drinking that a young man, who would be chaste, should mortify his body. Whoever feeds his slave too delicately, will find him rebellious*. *Ecce hæc fuit iniquitas Sodomæ..... saturitas panis et abundantia.* Excess of wine leads of itself to impurity†: it is a help to reprobation, of which human frailty has indeed no need. Alas! the most austere, the rudest penance did not secure the saints from the snares of the enemy. Listen to St. Jerome, who gives you himself the melancholy picture of his combats and alarms. "I lived," says he, "in a frightful desert, in a vast solitude. "I had no other company than scorpions and "wild beasts. I only yielded to sleep when it "absolutely overpowered me, and the bare "ground was the only bed which I offered to "my thinly covered bones. My face was disfi-"gured by continual fasting. In a word, I "was dead before my death, and yet the fire of "my passions which still subsisted, devoured "me with the most cruel impetuosity; and I

* Qui delicatè nutrit servum suum, sentiet eum contumacem. *Prov.* xx. 21.

† Luxuriosa res vinum.—Nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria. *Prov.* xx. *Ephes.* v. 18.

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" bore night and day in my bosom the seduc-
" tive image of the vanities of Rome*." Theotime, if a man, in an advanced age, and in that state of inanition which the holy doctor has depicted to us in such mournful colours, had so much difficulty in disarming the angel of Satan who tormented him, what will become of a young man, who, in that tumultuous age in which impurity boils up with the blood in his veins, is neither familiar with mortification, nor temperance? The scripture has taught us by those words so often quoted, but yet so fully justified by experience: *Luxuriosa res vinum:* and St. Jerome has repeated it to us by those other words so full of sense and energy: *Venter mero et cibis æstuans despumat in libidines*†.

But to a strict and rigid temperance, especially in the use of wine, must be joined a serious application which may exclude all idleness. This will be a fourth means of keeping off the enemy. *Hæc fuit iniquitas Sodomæ, saturitas et otium.* The demon of indolence is next

* O quoties ego ipse in eremo constitutus et in vasta solitudine, putabam me Romanis interesse deliciis. Si quando somnus oppressisset, nuda humo vix ossa cohærentia collidebam; scorpionum tantum socius et ferarum, sæpe choris intereram puellarum. Pallebant ora jejuniis, et ante hominem jam sua carne præmortuum sola libidinum incendia ebulliebant. *S. Hieron.*

† A stomach heated with wine, and choice meats, discharges itself in lusts.

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neighbour to that of impurity: both carry on a communication together. The first by stupifying you, opens the door to the other, and he does not fail to enter. Let the old serpent then always find you employed well and in a holy manner*; then he will turn himself in vain on every side, he will find nothing that he can devour. As long as David was at the head of his armies, and Solomon was employed in building a temple to the Lord, they both lived in the most exact regularity. The first reposed at home while his troops were in the field. The second would taste at his ease the fruit of his labours: and then it was that both of them experienced those deplorable falls which cost the one so many tears, and which the other perhaps bewails to this day†.

A fifth means to preserve us from impurity,

* Facito semper aliquid, ut inveniat te diabolus occupatum. *Hieron. Epist. ad Rusticum.*

† The learned are greatly divided about the repentance of Solomon. Many able men, founding their opinion partly on the book of Ecclesiastes, believe that he returned to God; and this is the opinion which I have followed in another work, (Moral. tom. 10, pag. 60) Others think the contrary, because he left public monuments of his idolatry, which a penitent prince should have destroyed; and through the whole of Ecclesiastes, he does not say a word of his irregularities, for which he ought at least to have made a solemn reparation. The surest way is to leave his judgment to God, and tremble for ourselves.

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and from every other disorder, is to cast from time to time, and especially in the moment of temptation, a look into eternity. *Remember thy last end*, says the scripture, *and thou shalt never sin**. What mortal, when he reflects that there is a hell, and in this hell a pool of fire and brimstone, which has neither end nor limits, can sin with tranquillity? It was this salutary reflection, which saved the holy solitary St. Martinian on the very brink of the precipice. On the point of yielding to the artifices of a wretched creature, whom the unclean spirit had conducted into his desert to make him fall after twenty-five years of penance, he lighted a large fire, and thrust his feet into it. At the cries which the pain caused him to utter, Zoe, which was the woman's name, ran to him, and found him upon the ground, bathed in his tears, with his feet half consumed. *Alas!* said he then to her, *if I cannot bear a fire so weak and of so short a duration as this, how shall I endure the fire of hell, that fire which shall never be extinguished?* This lesson had its effect upon the temptress. She retired to Bethlehem, to the monastery of St. Paula. There she passed the remainder of her days in such rigorous penance, that she had only the bare ground for her bed, and bread and water for her food. Martinian surpassed her. At the end of seven months,

* Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis. *Eccles.* vii.



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which elapsed before he was cured, he retired into a frightful solitude, and there spent six years, exposed night and day to all the injuries of the weather.

O Theotime, how happy should I feel, how well should I think myself repaid for my labour, if each one of those who shall have patience to read this little work, would say to himself seriously: "At the moment I am "reading this, there are in hell millions of "unhappy wretches, who are there for no "other cause, than because they did not resist "an impure passion. What profit do they "now reap from their criminal pleasures? "For many ages they have only thought of "them with transports of rage: and these "transports will endure for ever, because the "fire which devours them will never have an "end. If I live like them, I must expect to "die like them, to burn like them, to despair "like them." O eternity, so consoling to those who strive against their passions, so cruel to those who have the weakness to yield to them, mayest thou be ever present to my mind! But it has been said long ago, that the conduct of man is the most incomprehensible of mysteries. To believe what he believes, and to live as he lives, are two things which cannot be reconciled.

The last means which gives force to all the others, and which returns upon us in all kinds of spiritual matters, is prayer, but an humble, animated, and persevering prayer. God will

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not always deliver you from the troublesome thoughts which assail you. The long and painful conflicts which St. Jerome had to sustain, will furnish you with a great and melancholy example of it: and perhaps you may find another more surprising in the person of St. Paul, who implored more than once, and did not obtain to be delivered from the sting of the flesh which tormented him*. But, Theotime, you will be always assured of two things; one, that God will never permit you to be tempted above your strength; the other, that he will make your temptations useful, and for one victory gained over them, he will enable you to gain more considerable ones†. Pray then, Theotime, and pray at all times. I do not tell you, break off your studies; I recommend you to interrupt them occasionally by a lively and fervent aspiration. You need only a moment to say: *O Lord, come to my assistance, make*.

* Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ, angelus satanæ qui me colaphizet, *seu cruciet*, et quasi colaphis cædat. 2 *Cor.* xii. 7. The greater number of modern interpreters understand this *sting* of the revolts of the flesh. St. Chrysostom, Œcumenius, and other ancients, do not believe that the apostle was subject to them. They explain the passage of the persecutions which St. Paul had to suffer, as he says in verse 10.

† Fidelis Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, &c. 1 *Cor.* x. 13.



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*haste to help me: Jesus, Son of David, save me; I am perishing, stretch out thy hand to me.*

But while you invoke the Son, you must not forget the Mother. She is that august Mother and Virgin by excellence, and the protectress of virgins. If she is the refuge and asylum of sinners, she will be much more so that of a young man who desires to imitate her in the fairest of virtues. Repeat to her, Theotime, at least once every day, the little prayer which you find at the end of this book: exclaim from time to time, *Vitam præsta puram: Mites fac et castos.* It is not she who will give you purity; but she will not fail to obtain it for you, if you invoke her as you ought. She will support you in conjunctures as delicate, and perhaps more dangerous than those in which Joseph found himself with his wicked mistress.

I take occasion from this to tell you in conclusion, that if you ought carefully to avoid the company of a libertine whether young or old, you ought not to be without fear and precaution in the company of women, and of those even who make profession of virtue. There is a prudence, *says Origin*, there is prudence in making a road to victory as well by wise and cautious timidity, as by force or temerity. To be often with persons of a different sex, and not to do any evil, says St. Bernard, is something more difficult than to raise the dead to life. You cannot do the easier of the two, and would you have me give you credit for the more difficult?

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The Holy Ghost, who is always so accurate in his expressions, tell you in Ecclesiasticus: *Never look upon a maiden, lest her beauty be a stumbling block to thee.....above all turn away thy face from a woman dressed up, and gaze not about upon another's beauty. For many have perished by the beauty of a woman: and hereby lust is enkindled as fire*†. In vain will you tell me, *pursues St. Augustin*, that you have a pure heart, when I see you with impure eyes. You are not allowed to look on what you are not allowed to desire*. It is the maxim of St. Gregory the Great, and it can only be contested by those who neither set bounds to their looks nor desires.

## *Prayer of a young Man whom God has preserved from this Sin.*

EVERY thing declares to me, O my God, the inestimable value of purity. To animate me to the practice of it, had I only the example of that concourse of virgins, who sacrificed the

† Verginem ne conspicias, ne fortè scandalizeris in decore illius....Averte faciem tuam a muliere compta, et ne circumspicias speciem alienam. Propter speciem mulieris multi perierunt: et ex hoc concupiscentia quasi ignis exardescit. *Ecclus.* ix.

* Oculi vestri, etsi jaciuntur in aliquem, figantur in neminem.....Nec dicatis vos habere animos pudicos, si habeatis oculos impudicos. *August. Epist.* 109.—Intueri non licet quod non licet concupiscere. *Greg. Mag. L* 21 *moral. c.* 2.



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most honourable alliances, and even their lives, to preserve it inviolably, this would be sufficient to make a profound impression upon me. But I find something more instructive in the person of thy only Son. When his love for me induced him to become man, he broke through all the laws of nature to be born of a virgin. He chose a precursor whose purity was spotless, and who became a martyr to it. He only once spoke in private to a woman, and then only to put a stop to her disorders. In fine, although he was pleased to permit calumny to impute to him connections with sinners, and even with the prince of devils, he did not permit that it should ever dare to accuse him on the subject of purity. What lessons for me! shall I, O my God, shall I be so insensible as not to profit by them? United in one and the same body with Jesus Christ by my regeneration in baptism, shall I so far forget myself as to take the members of that adorable head, and make them members of a prostitute*. Permit it not, O Lord, I entreat thee, and I shall never cease to entreat thee; for, alas! in the conflict which I shall have to sustain, it is not in my bow, nor on my arrows, that I ought to trust†. Thou alone, O my God, thou alone art my hope. Vouchsafe to stand at my side

* Tollens ergo membra Christi, faciam membra meretricis? Absit. 1 *Cor.* vi. 15.

† Non enim in arcu meo sperabo, et gladius meus non salvabit me. *Ps.* xliii. 7.

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to combat with me. Extinguish the cruel flame which rises from time to time in my heart. Disperse the miserable phantoms which arise in my imagination. Teach me to bring under subjection this flesh which is always rebellious, and unites with my enemies for my destruction. I will sing for ever thy power and thy mercy. What an unhappiness would it have been for me, if thou hadst not preserved me from the snares which hell has so often prepared for me! What a misery, if by forsaking thee first, I should deserve that thou shouldst cease to be my protector! Continue, O Lord, to extend thy right hand to the work of thy hands*. Whatever it may cost me, with the assistance of thy grace, neither life, nor death shall make me yield to forbidden pleasures: or rather, I will never consider as true pleasures those moments of passion, which only leave behind them a long, a cruel, and a shameful repentance.

And you, O holy Virgin, who have been raised by your incomparable purity to the dignity of Mother of God; holy Virgin, you who take pleasure in being the protectress of every age, and more particularly of youth, look on me with those eyes of mercy, of which my weakness has so great need. Present to your dear Son the resolution I have made, to live and die in his service. Without ceasing I

* Opera manuum tuarum porriges dexteram tuam. *Job* xiv. 15.

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will invoke the holy name of Jesus; but I never will separate it from the name of Mary.

*Prayer of a young Man moved to Sorrow for his Irregularities,*

SAVE me, O Lord; the burning waters of the abyss have penetrated to the marrow of my bones. My imprudence and my passions have cast me into the open sea *; I sustain there, stroke after stroke, the most violent assaults of the tempest, and there is nothing left me but a breath of life. Alas! in declaring to me, that he who loves danger, shall not fail to perish in it, thou hast declared to me all my misfortunes. How wretched is my situation, how desolate my condition! I cannot behold my enormous and shameful fall, without my heart being broken in pieces. What are become of those happy days, in which I felt so sensibly that thou wert the God of my heart; in which my soul tasted in peace the pure pleasure of belonging wholly to thee; in which I feared no other evil but that of displeasing thee? By what fatality am I now so different from myself? Ever since I became enslaved to the demon of impurity, I have lived in such a trouble as affords me neither peace

* Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aqua usque ad animam meam. . . Veni in altitudinem maris, et tempestas demersit me. *Ps.* lxviii. 1 *et* 3.

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nor respite. I expected real pleasure, but, after a moment of intoxication, I found nothing but the bitterest wormwood. The miserable spirit which possesses me, has made me the sport of all its caprices. It stifles the remorse of my conscience, to precipitate me into a new crime; and it overwhelms me with the same remorse, when I have had the misfortune to commit it. I can neither endure nor forsake my condition; every day I purpose to burst my chains, and every day I redouble their weight. A moment more, and I should have abandoned myself to despair, if a ray of thy grace had not reminded me, that in this life thy anger does not go so far as entirely to extinguish thy mercies*, and that David, Magdalen, Thais, and many others, experienced their salutary effects. I know, my God, that they returned to thee by no other road than that of humiliation and penance. I do not refuse to enter upon it: penetrate my flesh with that fear which conducts to the love of thee. Burn, cut, and spare not †: I accept all willingly, provided that thou spare and pardon me in eternity. I say it from the very bottom of my heart: *From this moment I begin.* Ah! let my eyes run

* Numquid in æternum projiciet Deus?....Aut obliviscetur misereri, aut continebit in irâ suâ misericordias suas? *Ps.* lxxvi. 8 *et* 10.

† Hic ure, hic seca, hic non parcas, modo in æternum parcas. *S. August.*

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down with tears. Let my eyelids find no repose either day or night. Let my life be spent in sorrow, and the remainder of my days in groanings. *Exitus aquarum deducite oculi mei; deficiat in dolore vita mea, et anni mei in gemitibus.*

## CHAP. VII.

### *A Student should accustom himself to a hardy Life.*

1. A BOOK which lately fell into my hands, though it is not a new work *, suggested the idea of this chapter. The author says with reason, that when a person has been spoiled in youth, there is no longer time to begin to harden himself against fatigue. He quotes on this subject the words of Montagne †: "Har-

* Treatise on the Education of Children, by John Locke. John Locke is celebrated for several works. His *Essay on the Human Understanding* contains maxims as dangerous as they are false, and which have been solidly refuted by several authors. This philosopher died about thirty miles from London, on the 28th of October, 1704, at the age of 72.

† Michael de Montagne. His *Essays* are his principal work. Their natural style has gained them great credit. There are some sentiments in

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" den your child against heat and cold, wind,
" sun, and all hazards which he ought to de-
" spise. Take from him all softness and de-
" licacy in cloathing and sleeping, eating and
" drinking. Accustom him to every thing:
" let him not be a beau and a handsome boy,
" but a brisk and vigorous youth. I have al-
" ways thought and judged thus, in my child-
" hood, manhood, and old age."

This prelude is not enough for the English philosopher He would have children bathed at an early age in cold water, winter and summer. To prove that this practice is not dangerous, except when they bathe immediately after some exercise which has overheated them, he adduces the example of the ancient Germans and even of the ladies in Scotland, *who bathe their children in this manner in the depth of winter, and do not find that the cold water, even when mixed with ice and snow, does them any injury.* He adds, that the Romans would have their children taught to swim as soon as they were old enough to learn: and they judged, says he, this exercise so necessary, that they placed it, in a manner, on a parallel with the *belles lettres:* for in order to designate a man without education, and who was fit for nothing, they commonly said: *nec litteras didici, nec natare.*

them too free, some expressions which are indecent, and a great deal of vanity. He died on the 15th of September, 1592, aged 60 years.

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Moreover, he would not have children dine or sup at a regular hour, because whenever that hour is past, they are either out of humour with excessive hunger, or languid and low for want of appetite,

I leave others to pronounce upon the justness of these maxims. No doubt there will be some who will not entirely approve of them; but every one must applaud two other lessons which he gives, one to forbid young people the use of strong liquors, and the other, to accustom them to rise early in the morning, because there is nothing better for health; that when once they have acquired the habit in youth, *they will, when arrived at manhood, be careful not to dissipate the best and most considerable part of their lives in sleeping, or indulging themselves in bed; and that finally, as in order to rise early, they must retire early to bed, they avoid by this practice those evening revellings so hurtful and dangerous to health.*

II. As these reflections, true or false, are little more than philosophical, you will allow me, Theotime, to propose to you two others, which are at least equally solid. The first is simply moral. The second is both moral and political. A hardy life accords best, or to speak more correctly, it is the only one which accords at all with the maxims of the gospel. A hardy life is the only one which can qualify us to discharge in a proper manner the different duties of the Church, the state, and se-

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ciety in general; which may be entrusted to us in after life.

III. That a hard laborious life, full of application, and consequently an enemy to softness and pleasure, is the only one which can accord with the gospel; is what you will not doubt of, if you consider that this same gospel proposes to us as a model a Man-God, who was in labours from his youth *, who, while the birds of the air had nests, and the foxes had dens, had not a stone to rest his head upon; who, spent with fatigue, had nothing to extinguish his thirst but a little water, which a Samaritan woman gave him out of charity: who, though absolute master of all the treasures of heaven and earth, was yet so poor that to pay a small tribute to Cæsar, he was obliged to call in miracles to the relief of his indigence †. By attentively examining this great pattern which is presented you from the mountain, you will see at once, that if those who inhabit the palaces of kings, believe themselves authorised to be clothed in soft garments, and to live in delicacy ‡, a man who would be a disciple of Jesus Christ, should regulate his conduct by that of Jesus Christ,

* In laboribus à juventute meâ. *Ps.* lxxxvii. 16.

† See the 17th chap of St. Matthew, ver. 23 and following.

‡ Ecce qui mollibus vestiuntur....qui in veste pretiosâ sunt et deliciis, in domibus regum sunt. *S. Matt.* xi. 8. et *S. Luc.* vii. 25.



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and after his example, lead a life as mortified and as penitent as human weakness can permit.

IV. And this, Theotime, is what has been done in every age, by those incomparable men, who were at once models of religion, and sensible proofs of its divinity. They were seen, those men of whom the world was not worthy, leading a life which appeared much superior to the powers of human nature. Wandering and reduced to the greatest indigence, clothed in the skins of beasts, without a home, without any secure retreat, they wandered here and there, and had no other shelter from the injuries of the weather and the persecutions of their enemies, than caves, underground caverns, and the tops of mountains *.

In less stormy times, voluntary mortifications succeeded to these forced trials. The deserts of Sceté and Thebais produced thousands of holy penitents. The rigid austerity of the Pauls, the Anthonies, and the Simeon Stylites, makes us tremble even now to think of them †. Without going as far as they did,

* Circuierunt in melotis, in pellibus caprinis, egentes, angustiati, afflicti, quibus dignus non erat mundus, in solitudinibus errantes, in montibus, et speluncis, et in cavernis terræ *Heb.* xi. 37, 38.

† St. Simeon was named Stylites, because helived a long time on a pillar which was 36 cubits high. His life, says M. de Tillemont, is as incontestible

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which the gospel does not prescribe to us, no one of those who have walked after them in their holy footsteps, ever failed to carry his cross, and bring his body under subjection. The hair shirt even mounted the throne in the person of St. Louis, and the church of Poisy, which preserves with respect the instruments of his penance, proclaims even in our days the pious excesses of his mortification. Notwithstanding the iniquity of the times, and in spite of the madness of incredulity, these fine examples subsist at this day, and you will find even now, beneath the banners of the Bernards, the Brunos, the Teresas, the Clares, &c. noble servants of God of both sexes, who eat their unsavoury herbs with more relish than the sensual rich man in the gospel did his delicious meats: *Et ideo ipsi judices vestri erunt.* As the Ninivites and the Queen of Saba will one day rise up against the Jews, these victims of penance will rise up against us at the day of vengeance. They will not ask us if we have followed their example in every thing; they will ask us if we have not done all in our power not to follow it in the smallest particular. What answer shall we be able to make to this terrible question? No other than that of the unfortunate man, who dared

as it is admirable and inimitable. This innocent and penitent saint died in 461 or 462, at the age of 69.



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to enter in the banqueting room without a wedding garment: *At ille obmutuit.*

V. If a hardy life, and a life inimical and opposed to softness, is the only one which disposes us to walk in the narrow way of the gospel, it is likewise the only one which disposes a youth to perform as he ought the duties of those employments with which he may be entrusted in after life. If he enter into the priesthood, if he enter into the army, the law, or a mercantile profession, you may rely upon it, that if he follows his own inclinations, if he loves his own ease, and studies his own comforts, if he does not know how to conquer himself from morning to night, he will be a very poor subject in any of these professions, and most assuredly he will find his ruin in them. I say but a word on each one of them, because a word for each is enough to make it well understood.

VI. No, Theotime, whatever the world world may think, or rather, whatever those unfortunate ecclesiastics may think, who are a disgrace to the sanctuary, a priest is not made to lead a comfortable and idle life. Study and prayer, that is to say, two occupations very painful to nature, should divide his time. The master, who has placed him in his vineyard, has not placed him there to stand with his arms crossed, but to dig it with care, to cultivate it assiduously, and to make it bring forth fruit. When he gives him only one talent, he does not require him to gain five, but

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he expects this single talent to fructify as much as it can fructify. When he entrusts to him his flock, that flock which cost him so much, since he purchased them by his blood, he commands him in formal terms to preserve them from the fury of the wolves, to lead them out into good pastures, and to present them to him in good condition, whenever he shall judge proper to visit him*. All this, you see, my dear son, requires a life of labour; and a life of labour, considering the propensity man has to indulge his ease, is always a very hard life.

VII. To convince you more and more of this important truth, I beseech you to remark with me, that labour and fatigue have always been the first conditions which God required of those by whom he designed to perform great things in the apostolic ministry. An angel foretells to Zachary the birth of John the Baptist. He declares to him that he shall be great before the Lord, that he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, and shall go before the Lord with all the power of Elias. But he adds at the same time that he shall be a man of mortification, and that he shall never drink wine, nor any liquor capable of intoxicating. You know with what austerity the holy child observed

* Sicut visitat pastor gregem suum . . . visitabo oves meas. *Ezech.* xxxiv. 12.



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this law. Locusts and wild honey were all his nourishment, and even of these he eat so little, that they said of him, that he lived without eating or drinking *. The Son of God chooses his Apostles; he announces to them in the first place, that he will make them *fishers of men;* and to make them sensible that this second kind of fishing will cost them much more than that which till then had occupied them, he forewarns them without disguise, that they shall be persecuted, reduced to fly from town to town, hated, and hated universally, for the defence of his name †. Such also was the prelude to the grace which he granted to St. Paul, when he destined him to the functions of the evangelical ministry. He is, said he, speaking of him to Ananias, he is a vessel which I have chosen for myself; and I will shortly teach him how great things he will have to suffer for my sake ‡. Weigh well these two expressions: *he is a vessel of election;* for *he will have great things to suffer.* But take care to draw from them this conclusion, that a young man brought up in softness will never be, if God does not remould him by a kind of

* Venit Joannes Baptista, neque manducans, neque bibens vinum, &c. *Luc.* vii. 33.

† Eritis odio omnibus propter nomen meum. *S. Matt.* x. 22.

‡ Vas electionis est mihi iste (*Saulus*) .. Ego enim ostendam illi quanta oporteat eum pro nomine meo pati. *Act* ix. 16.

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miracle, of the number of those who are born for the salvation of Israel*.

VIII. He will be no better in the law than in the priesthood. And why? because the profession of a magistrate requires much study, continued application, and very tedious exactitude. If to be an excellent judge, it were enough to appear occasionally in the schools of law, to hear without attention the lectures of an able professor, and to repeat stolen arguments in public theses; then, indeed we should not fail to have good judges. But all these are only calculated to make very bad ones. A true magistrate will do what was done in their times by the Bignons, the Daguesseaux, and so many others, whose names are inscribed by justice in her immortal calendars. After their example, he studies the laws, the royal decrees, and that labyrinth of customs, by which what holds good here is of no force at six miles distance. He examines an affair as deeply as it deserves. He neither trusts to the solicitations of the interested party, nor the extracts of an unfaithful and sometimes corrupt secretary. In court, he does not repair by a deadly drowsiness his nights given to gaming and pleasure. When he is entrusted with a cause, he enters upon it speedily as possible. He does not distress his poorer clients by cruel delays, whose whole property is perhaps reduced to his name and

* Ipsi autem non erant de semine virorum illorum per quos salus facta est in Israel. 1 *Machab.* v. 62.

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his integrity. He does not consider a hunting party or a journey of pleasure a sufficient reason to defer it from day to day, from week to week, and sometimes from year to year. Thus the life of a virtuous judge is really a life full of occupation, or rather a life full of fatigue. Do you then really think, Theotime, that a young man, who has done nothing serious till the age of nearly thirty years, who has spent one half of his time in pampering himself, and making himself an Adonis, in paying and receiving visits, to say the least of them, very superfluous, is very capable of discharging so many and such painful duties? No, my dear Son, he will do like many others, that is, he will lose his soul like them. But, says St. Augustin, *Non propterea minus ardebunt, quia cum multis ardebunt* Serm. 351.

IX. I shall say little of the military profession. You have no need of Scripture, nor of the Holy Fathers, to conceive that a man who *will support the hard labours of Mars*, ought to prepare himself in early life to fatigues of every kind. Your pagan poets have told you so more elegantly than I could do it *, and the example of all ages has confirmed it. The great Turenne, that hero, who was at once a model of prudence, of valour,

* Angustam, amici, pauperiem pati
Robustus acri militiâ puer
Condiscat, &c. ..... *Horat.*

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and the most exact piety*, at the age of ten, passed a whole night upon the ramparts of Sedan, upon the carriage of a canon; and this young officer, whom France lamented several years ago, and whom she even now regrets, would not have given room to such just and high expectations, if he had not been educated under the eyes of a firm father, and been formed, almost from his infancy, to all the rigours of a military life Respect, attachment, and gratitude, would oblige me to enter into a more lengthened detail: but I forbear, because I know that *there are wounds which time does never sufficiently heal, so that they can at any time be touched without opening them afresh*†.

X. If the superior orders demand so much activity; if their several functions cannot be discharged as they should be, without taking a great deal upon one self, it is easy to see that subordinate conditions cannot be made for repose; and therefore it is very little known by those who wish to succeed in their

* M. de Turenne was killed by a cannon ball at Saspach, on the 26th of July, 1675. He had heard Mass and communicated in the morning. See his life by the respectable M. de Ramsay, who well deserves to have his own life written.

† The words of M. the Duke of Nivernois at the end of his reply to the discourse of M. l'Abbé Trublet, when he was received into the French Academy, on the 13th of April, 1761.

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affairs. They sacrifice, at least for a time, and sometimes even for ever, their most tender friends; they cross the seas; they brave the tempests; they dwell, like Jacob, for many years in the midst of a barbarous people. The evil is, that they too often lose sight of God, and that the hard life which they lead is very little referred to God. But after all, you may infer, both from their conduct, and still more from the principles which we have been establishing, that man is born to labour, as the bird is born to fly*; that wise economy condemns you to a hard life, no less than the gospel; and that, as we never do a thing better than when we do it in good time, it is of extreme importance to youth, to be accustomed to bear from their tenderest years a yoke which habit renders lighter and lighter; and finally, renders so delightful, that it is hard to conceive how a man can live without labour.

You have a striking example of this, in all those who love study. Excepting only the time which is immediately set apart for God, they give whole days to it without interruption; and these days they find pass away with surprising rapidity. A visit, always importunate when it is not of immediate utility, disconcerts them. They scarcely give to nature what they cannot refuse her. They would pur-

* Homo nascitur ad laborem, et avis ad volatum. *Job* v. 7.

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chase at a great price the time which they see abused by unhappy youths, who know not its value. If they occasionally moderate the thirst which devours them, it is because they fear lest it should change into a passion, and every passion is to be feared. It is not that, notwithstanding their relish for labour, they do not sometimes feel its weight and difficulties; but they know, that as the worst that can be done with land, is to leave it without cultivation; and as a field which produces nothing good, will not fail to bring forth thorns and thistles *; so the worst use that can be made of the mind, is to make no use of it; or if you will, they see, that whenever it is employed about nothing, it is soon employed about evil.

Thus, Theotime, you will always bear in mind that maxim of a good servant of God, that *in order to be happy, you must divert the mind, and mortify the body.* You will neither complain of rising early, nor faring coarsely in your food; a complaint which is unknown to well-bred children, and is hardly known to any but those who live better at college than at their own homes. You will suffer in peace the rigours of winter and the heats of summer.

* Per agrum hominis pigri transivi....et ecce totum repleverant urticæ, et operuerant superficiem ejus spinæ. *Prov.* xxiv. 30, 31. Terra.... proferens spinas ac tribulos, reproba est et maledicto proxima. *Hebr.* vi. 8.

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With the help of grace you will go further, and you will add to the little pains of your condition those pains of choice, the sacrifice of which is agreeable to God, because it is more voluntary. Alas! perhaps you will one day thank him for having inured you early to hardships. A man who has never combated, is soon overthrown. It is rare that a prince is dethroned and laden with chains like Manasses; but it is not rare that a man, to whom futurity presented nothing but the fairest and most legitimate prospects, experiences all the rigours of fortune. These heavy strokes fall with much less weight, when from your youth you have accustomed yourself to will what God wills. You exclaim then, with a spirit of peace, like the holy man Job, *God has given, God has taken away. May his name be eternally blessed.*

## *Prayer.*

I AM sensible, O Lord, that when I propose to my very feeble nature, to lead from my youth a hard and painful life, I shall draw from her the loudest complaints. Born an enemy to all that gives her pain, she seeks for nothing but her ease and convenience. If she suffers ever so little, I see her in a state of violent agitation. To live in peace with her, she must be supplied both with necessaries and superfluities. But, my amiable Saviour, this is not the example which thou didst give

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me during the time that thy love for man retained thee upon earth. Scarcely wert thou born, when thou didst already announce to me, that to be worthy to walk after thee, I must deny myself, and take up my cross. A stable was thy only refuge at the time of thy birth: thou hadst no other company than poor shepherds; and as if this slight alleviation was too much, thou wert soon compelled to forego it, and seek in a foreign land an asylum against the rage and trouble of King Herod. The rest of thy life corresponded well with such painful beginnings. Hunger, thirst, and fatigue, were thy ordinary portion; and in thy last moments thou didst concentrate the bitterest ingredients of those which had preceded. What a lesson for me! And is it not time for me to say with an ancient solitary: My master is nailed to the cross; he has nothing to quench his thirst but vinegar mingled with gall; he is crucified by all the objects that surround him; and I cowardly enslaved to my flesh, shall I refuse it nothing? Shall I complain of a moment of sleep of which I am deprived? Shall I satisfy my appetite, or rather my gluttony, as often as I find an opportunity? Shall I never imitate the sacrifice which David made of a cup of water which he had eagerly desired? No, my adorable Jesus! it shall not be so. *Dixi, nunc cœpi:* I will begin to bring my body under subjection, to subdue the propensity which it has for its own comforts; in a word, to accustom it, for thy sake, to a



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hard and penitent life; well persuaded, that if I do not begin in good time, I shall neither be able to return to it afterwards, nor fulfil thy designs in my regard. Bless, O Lord, the resolution with which thou hast now inspired me; a resolution which, in every age, has been so glorious and so profitable to thy faithful servants. Now that I have a God-Man, born in a manger and dying on a cross, a more moving model than Urias had, now that I protest like him, that I will never forgive myself any repose or indulgence which is unworthy of a true disciple of Jesus Christ: *Arca Dei et Israel et Juda habitant in papilionibus, et Dominus meus Joab, et servi domini mei super faciem terræ manent; et ego ingrediar domum meam ut comedam et bibam? ... Per salutem tuam, et per salutem animæ meæ non faciem rem hanc.* 2 Regum xi. 11.

## CHAP. VIII.

*A good Student should frequent the Sacraments, and avoid such Obstacles as might prevent him from so doing.*

As this chapter contains several subjects, I shall divide it into different articles, to relieve the attention. The first will regard Confession, and the faults to be avoided in it. The second will treat of Communion. The object

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of the third will be to examine the obstacles which hinder so many young students from approaching the sacraments, or reaping from them the fruit which they are accustomed to produce, when they are received with good and holy dispositions.

## § 1. OF CONFESSION.

It is not without reason that I recommend every young scholar, and every other person who wishes to live in a Christian manner, to approach the sacrament of penance frequently. In fact, I am well persuaded, and if he pay ever so little attention he will be persuaded as well as I am, 1st, That it is the surest means he has to be preserved from those fatal falls which are so common among those of his profession; and 2dly, That it is the only means he has to find his way out of the precipice, when he has had the misfortune to fall into it.

I. Yes, Theotime, confession is the true and surest means which a young man possesses, to be preserved from the faults to which he is inclined, either by his own propensities, or by the evil counsels of a treacherous neighbour, who is laying snares for his innocence. Let us suppose, for example, that at the age of thirteen or fourteen he begins to feel the first sparks of an impure fire, of which he before had no idea; and that this unfortunate fire, which had no need of any foreign fuel to increase it, is nourished by contagious



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conversation and company, and sometimes even by the solicitations of a new comer, who is not contented till he has made his friends as corrupt and depraved as himself. In so critical a position, what can a young man do, to whom the tempter offers nothing but flowers, without letting him see the wormwood by which they are always followed. Once more I repeat it, his great resource must be to fly, and to fly very speedily to his confessor. He is a faithful friend, to whom he can unbosom himself in perfect security: he is a tender father, who will be charmed with the marks of confidence which his son will give him, and still more so to be able to assist him in his pressing necessity. He is a shepherd, who will redouble his vigilance to save his sheep, which that very day perhaps would have been lost: he will give this child salutary advice. He will lay open to him in all its frightful extent the dark abyss into which a false friend, that is to say a cruel enemy, is seeking to precipitate him. He will separate him for ever from the company of an abandoned wretch, who ought at least to be contented with his own perdition, without seeking to destroy the souls of others. He will prescribe him prayers suitable to his situation, and he will redouble his own prayers for him. In fine, he will not fail to repeat to him that truth so well known, but so little reflected upon: pleasure lasts but for a moment: the pain which follows it lasts for eternity; *Momentaneum quod delectat, æternum*

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*quod cruciat.* The grace of the sacrament, joined to the moving exhortations of the pious director, will make them doubly efficacious. The man that is wavering will be established in his way : his heart dilated, will walk in it with fresh ardour *; and he will bless the happy moment when the victory which he has gained over himself, by overcoming a kind of repugnance to lay open the state of his conscience, rendered him victorious over the artifices of the seducer.

II. Such, Theotime, is the first effect of confession. It establishes in all good, it regulates the step of a traveller, who was beginning to go astray. And the devil knows this better than any one ; and therefore the first thing he is accustomed to do, whether by himself, or by means of his infamous ministers, is to persuade those to keep away from it, whose ruin he is resolved upon. One turns his devotion into ridicule, and sometimes goes so far as to accuse him of hypocrisy. Another proceeds in a more subtle manner ; he congratulates him on his virtue, but maintains at the same time that it is too austere ; that he takes scandal at mere trifles, that he takes every thing to be criminal, and that in a short time no one will be able to live with him. This, begs him to defer for a few days ;

* Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum. *Ps.* cxviii.



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and after this first delay, he endeavours to obtain a second. That, still more hateful, will go so far as to offer a sort of violence to him, similar to that of which I spoke in chap. v.; and a festival day will be the one in which he will take pleasure in executing it. Thus is the earth covered with snares: happy he who knows how to escape them.

III. Confession, when it is well made, is a resource for those who have had the misfortune to be entangled in these snares. Penance, says the Church in the last and most learned of her councils*, is a second plank after shipwreck. It is a salutary pool, which, like that of Siloe, and far superior to it, will cure the most inveterate maladies. It is a sacred fire, which consumes in us the old man with his concupiscences; which purifies our love, that it may have God for its end and object, and may terminate in him alone. In fine, it is a ministry of peace, which reconciles the prodigal son with a justly irritated father.

But this grace, which is nothing less than a real resurrection †, and which, after having established our health, fortifies it, and can finally render it more vigorous than it was at first; this grace, which is one of the most signal fruits of the mediation and

* Secunda post naufragium tabula. *Trident. Sess.* 14. *cap.* 14. *et can.* 2.

† Quæ assumptio nisi vita ex mortuis? *Rom.* xi. 15.

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blood of Jesus Christ, requires precautions, and many efforts; and it is not without reason that the holy Fathers have given it the name of *Laborious Baptism*. In order to give you some idea of this, allow me to detail to you, but very succinctly, the conduct which a person should pursue, who desires, after having offended God, to regain his favour. What I am about to say of a sinner, does not less apply to the very small number of those who are innocent.

IV. Wherever you are, Theotime, or in whatever state you may be, the first thing you have to do, is to choose a good director. If you cannot at first gain a knowledge of him by yourself, endeavour to know him by means of some one on whose testimony you can rely. A man who is easy with every one, by whom the strong and the weak, the good and the bad, are treated almost the same, is precisely the man who will not do for you. You have need of a pastor who will lead you into good pastures, and not into poisonous meadows; of a physician who can distinguish between leprosy and leprosy, and who will not put you to sleep upon your disorders; of a judge, who will weigh all your actions in the balance of the sanctuary. The assistance of men may discover him for you; but a lively and animated prayer will enable you to find him much better.

When once you have found him, do not leave him. Let him always be, and let him alone be the depositary of your troubles and

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your weaknesses. It too often happens that a young man who has had the misfortune to fall into some fault greater than usual, has recourse to a different confessor. Without doubt, I would rather he should do so, than see him conceal his sin through a false and guilty shame, which would lead him imperceptibly from sacrilege to sacrilege *. But it is to be feared that this way of acting, where there appears a considerable degree of self-love, by preventing him from being well known, will also hinder him from being as well directed as he might otherwise be.

It is not enough to have a good confessor, it is moreover necessary, that, as a physician, he should be perfectly skilled in the management of all our disorders, and especially of such of them as, of themselves, or by the means of others to which they may give rise, are capable of causing our spiritual death. But as they cannot well be declared and described unless they are known, and those more dangerous ones cannot be known but by a serious examination of conscience, it is certain, that by this we must begin; but it is no less certain that by this many begin to

* It is on this account that the Church allows an extraordinary confessor three or four times in a year to religious; and that good and discreet directors wish their penitents sometimes to have recourse to others, as St. Vincent of Paul did with regard to the virtuous Countess de Joigni.

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deceive themselves. Some sin, because they make their examination with too little care and exactitude: and others, because they do it in a manner too human and indifferent.

V. In fact, to dispose himself like a true penitent for the tribunal of reconciliation, an examination is necessary, in which a scholar enters into the detail of all the obligations attached to his present condition; such as those of employing his time well, of obeying his masters faithfully, of edifying his fellow-students, and others of a like nature, of which I have already spoken. An examination, in which, after having slowly gone over the commandments of God and his Church, he reproaches himself with the evil he has committed, the good which he has neglected to do, and the vain pretexts which indolence and passion have made use of to lead him to the one and turn him away from the other. An examination which will discover to us the great number of faults we commit every day against our duties towards God, when we do not adore him in spirit and in truth; against our duties towards our neighbour, when we scandalize him, or refuse him such services as we have it in our power to render; against ourselves, when we only think of the conveniences and comforts of our bodies, without scarce a thought for the necessities of our souls. An examination, in fine, as exact, if possible, as that which God will one day force us to undergo, when he shall come, with a lamp in his

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hand, to visit Jerusalem*; that is to say, when he shall lay open the confused and tumultuous chaos of our consciences, unfold all their intricacies, and expose them to the eyes of the assembled universe.

VI. Is it thus that we examine ourselves? I leave it to the judgment of Him, who has the sole right of searching the reins and the heart†. All that I can say is, that to judge of the examination of the greater part of young people by the whole tenor of their conduct, there is every reason to conclude that the greater part perform it in a manner wholly human and natural. They call to mind their sins, as they would recollect the circumstances of a history which is foreign to them. They know not, as they go over their misfortunes, what it is to be deeply afflicted at them. They do not invoke, or they invoke only in a languid and lifeless manner, that divine Spirit, who alone can form in man those sighs which are always heard. They seem to think, that when they come to the feet of their confessor, it will be then time enough to conceive sentiments of contrition for their deplorable condition. Thus their sorrow is for the most part of their time purely mechanical. They melt into tears when they meet with a confessor full of unction. A man who is not possessed of such talents, perceives in them neither confu-

* Scrutabor Jerusalem in lucernis. *Soph.* i. 12.
† Ego sum scrutans renes, &c. *Apoc.* ii. 32.

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sion nor sorrow, because it is man alone that acts upon them.

VII. Nevertheless, Theotime, this sincere sorrow for having offended God; this interior regret for having displeased the best of masters; contrition, in short, is the most essential part of the Sacrament of Penance. In fact, contrition alone can take off our heart from the creature, to turn it effectually to God. That alone, giving back to the Lord the glory of which sin had robbed him, obliges him to approach nearer to us, and to pardon us: that alone, in fact, can supply all the other parts of penance, and there is none which can supply its defect. Do not, then, deceive yourselves, all you who have had the unhappiness to abandon yourselves to disorderly lives: nothing but a contrite and profoundly humbled heart can lead you again into the favour of God. Promise a penance as public as your scandals have been: Antiochus engaged to do such penance in a solemn manner, and his protestations were rejected. Accuse yourselves of the blackest crimes; confess your injustices, be generous enough to restore what does not belong to you: Judas did more of all this than you will ever do. He publicly confessed that he was an unhappy wretch, who had betrayed the blood of the Just. In spite of all his avarice, he returned to the priests, and returned to the last farthing all that he had received from them, for his infamous and sacrilegious treason; and with all this great ap-

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pearance of repentance, which might easily exceed yours, he only hastened his condemnation, and precipitated his punishment. The reason is, that a tender and sincere sorrow for having offended God, is alone capable of appeasing him.

Give me on the contrary in the new law, a man as much moved at his crimes, as David was at his in the old law. Suppose him, on account of the pressure of sickness, incapable either of calling to mind all his excesses, or of finding a priest to whom he may declare them, or, of repairing the wrong which he has done his neighbour; although every thing else fails him, if a true and perfect contrition does not fail him, I can answer for his salvation. By what means was that thief justified who was converted on the cross a few minutes before his death? Was it by a regular confession of his crimes? No; he contented himself with declaring in general terms, that he deserved the punishment to which he had been condemned. Was it by an exact restitution of the property of which he had robbed his neighbour! Not at all; he possessed nothing but an humiliating nakedness. Whence comes it then, that he heard from the mouth of his Master those consoling words: *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise?* It was because he was alive to all the horrors of his past life. It was because he saw that the God-Man who suffered by his side, suffered indeed to expiate his robberies. It was because he was pierced, and

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pierced to the bottom of his heart, to see that it was himself who had fixed him to the cross. Such are the effects, but such also is the necessity of contrition; a necessity so great, so indispensable, that if there was only question of venial sins, they could only be effaced by sorrow for having committed them.

VIII. I say nothing of general confessions. It is certain that they may be very useful, and that saints of distinguished virtue have oftentimes made them, in order to humble themselves before God and men. It is also certain, that although by recalling certain ideas, they may be dangerous, they are often necessary, and especially to those who have concealed some mortal sin*, either through not having sufficiently examined their consciences, or through a miserable and accursed shame, which is the height of pride and weakness. It is the same with those who, having relapsed a short time after receiving absolution, give just reason to think that they had not proper contrition. In these several cases, and in many others, you must be guided by the judgment of your director: if he is enlightened and virtuous, you have nothing to fear.

When you have faithfully made your confes-

* A mortal sin, either in itself, or according to the false idea of the penitent. They often consider as very great a fault which is not so. This should induce young people especially to lay open their conscience always with confidence.



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sion, listen in peace to the instructions which your director will give you. "Do not imitate "many, who think of nothing but calling to "mind their sins, while the confessor speaks "to them; have a care of this fault, for it is "common, and makes one lose almost all "the advantages of confession*." If, after receiving absolution, you remember some grievous sin which you had forgotten in your confession, you must confess it the first opportunity: but this sin, if it was forgotten without any fault on your part, will not make your confession bad, nor hinder you from obtaining pardon; and although you are obliged to submit it to the keys of the Church, it is not the less certain that you have received the pardon of it. The Master whom we serve has never made a crime of involuntary forgetfulness.

Before you receive absolution, and whilst you are receiving it, beg pardon of God for your sins, with a sincere sorrow for having committed them, a firm resolution to do your utmost to avoid them in future, with the grace of your blessed Saviour, and a firm confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ.

Do not fail to accomplish piously and faithfully the penance which shall be imposed upon you. Perform it at the time and in the place which shall be prescribed for you. Do not forget that it is never more efficacious with God,

* Instruction of Youth, vol i. part 2. ch. 8. n. 7.

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than when it is performed in a state of grace, and that generally speaking it is not performed as it ought to be, when you are fulfilling at the same time another precept of obligation. Never have it changed by another confessor, but when it becomes either hurtful, or morally impossible for you to perform it. I have elsewhere laid down, after the best divines, the rules which he should follow on these occasions*.

I add, in conclusion, that although in most colleges it is usual to go to confession only once in a month, a scholar should occasionally go oftener, and that not only when his absolution is deferred for a week or a fortnight, in order to enable him to communicate in a more holy manner, but also when he is exposed to certain lamentable occasions of sin, in which he can hardly bear up without the repeated advice of his director. Experienced confessors never remit those penitents whom they wish to try to so long a time as three or four weeks. This period is too long for virtue already half undermined. Good advice is to them a kind of nourishment which must be repeated very frequently. They support them in the first combat for eight or ten days; and while they congratulate them in the Lord for their first victory, they teach them how to gain a second in the same space of time. By

* Moral. in 3 tom. xi part. 2 ch. 6 num. 245 et seq.



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degrees they dispose them to eat the heavenly bread which gives life, and of which I am to speak to you in the following article.

If you have found this rather long, I must tell you once more that when we have had the misfortune to offend God mortally, we ought not to defer imploring his forgiveness, and returning to him by a true and sincere sorrow for having offended him. Doctors of great weight and authority, but who are not of the number of those who place cushions under the elbow of the sinner*, go still farther, and assert that this wilful delay becomes a fresh sin. They discover a formal precept in those words of the scripture: *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For his wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee*†. It is true indeed that the Son of Man comes at an hour when he is least expected‡, and that therefore we must be always ready to appear before him. With due reflection, you will see that all these principles have a great connection with each other. But perhaps by a thorough examination you will conclude with these same

* Væ qui consuunt pulvillos sub omni cubito manûs: et faciunt cervicalia sub capite universæ ætatis ad capiendas animas, &c. *Ezech.* xiii. 18.

† Non tardes converti ad Dominum, et ne differas de die in diem: subitò enim venit îra illius, et in tempore vindictæ disperdet te. *Ecclus.* v. 8.

‡ Estote parati, quia quâ horâ non putatis Filius Hominis veniet. *Luc.* xii. 40.

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divines, that as that perfect contrition, which alone can justify without the sacrament, is very rare*, a man ought never to rely upon it; and that consequently the only plan he has to pursue, is to go to confession as soon as possible. If once you admit the principle, your piety and a reasonable fear will easily engage you to draw the conclusion. But is this principle which obliges a man, who has offended God, to ask his pardon as soon as possible, so obscure, so difficult to apprehend† ? See what a pious and celebrated Benedictine says on the subject: *To ask if a man, fallen into mortal sin, is obliged, as soon as he is sensible of it, to excite himself to contrition, appears to me to be the same as asking, if, after having committed a crime of high-treason against God, he may see himself in a state of separation from God and disgrace before him, and remain in that state with gaiety and indifference. It is as much as asking, if a man, who beholds himself in a state of hatred and reciprocal aversion with God, can tranquilly repose in such a state. It is asking, if a man, who knows himself to be an enemy of God, and the object of his contempt, his nausea and indignation, can with a safe conscience not so much as think of changing his dispositions and seeking to appease him. It is asking, in fine, if a man,*

* See the Catechism of the Council of Trent, part 2 n. 46.

† Quàm primum moraliter, *say the divines.*



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*who has just attempted the life of a prince, can remain without concern in his presence, without thinking of making him satisfaction, and without giving the smallest sign of repentance.*

And again: *Do you think it would be addressing Almighty God in proper language, to say to him: My God, I will labour sooner or later for my conversion; but in the mean time, O God, permit me to hate thee with all my heart; permit me to insult thee some time longer, by preferring creatures before thee. I know, my God, that my heart of right belongs to thee; but dispense, O my God, with me from giving it to thee so soon: I have given it to thy enemy for some days longer; do not be so pressing, O my God, but consent to my remaining another day in my rebellion against thee. At least, allow me, O God, to despise thee at my pleasure another half day, another hour, a few moments more.——Let such sinners flatter themselves as they please, this deliberate and cold-blooded delay tacitly includes all this**.

I will say no more to you on this matter, because a good catechism may easily supply the rest. Never think it beneath you, however old you are, to read yours over and over again. You will see in time, that there are people of high stations, who ought to learn it again.

* See the *Lettres theologiques et morales* du P. Lami, of the congregation of St. Maur. Paris, 1708, p. 2. This religious died at St. Denis in 1711, aged 75.

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*Prayer.*

I RETURN thee thanks, O my God, for having prepared for me, in the sacrament of penance, a resource under thy displeasure. Never permit me to neglect a means so calculated to reconcile me with thee, or ever to have the misfortune to abuse it. Henceforward, O Lord, I will be careful to have recourse to it, to prevent me from falling, and to raise me up when I have unhappily fallen. But I will not forget that it requires just and holy dispositions. I will weigh, by a severe examination, all my actions in the exact balance of thy gospel. I will recount them, like the holy king Ezechias, in the bitterness of a lively and profound contrition*. And is there any sorrow, my God, more just, more reasonable than that for having offended in thy person the best of fathers, the greatest of benefactors, the most true, the most tender of friends†? I have said it, and I will endeavour to observe it with an inviolable fidelity; I will confess against myself all the sins of which I am guilty‡. I will escape, by a momentary confusion, that confusion

* Recogitabo tibi omnes annos meos in amaritudine animæ meæ. *Isa.* xxxviii. 15.

† Vos amici estis····Vos autem dixi amicos, &c. *Joan.* xv. 14 *et* 15.

‡ Dixi: Confitebor adversum me injustitiam meam Domino: et tu remisisti impietatem peccati mei. *Psalm.* xxxi. 5.

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which thou layest up for those who are led by a false shame to deceive thy ministers, or rather to deceive themselves. I will obey even their most rigorous commands, as I would obey thy own. Their counsels shall be to me irrevocable precepts. I would accomplish, if it were possible, all their desires to an iota, as thou didst accomplish the will of thy Father. God forbid that I should ever complain of the penances which they think proper to impose upon me. I accept them all beforehand, however painful they may be to nature, well persuaded that there is no proportion between them and the glory which thou preparest for thy elect. Behold me, O Lord, at thy feet. Speak, amiable Jesus, thy servant heareth, and he is ready to follow thy voice. Long cherished passions, resentments, pride, interest, these and every thing else he will sacrifice. Happy is he who loses even his life for thy love in time, since he is very sure to find it again for all eternity. *Qui perdiderit animam suam propter me, salvam faciet eam.* Marc viii. 35.

## § 2. OF COMMUNION.

I. To instruct you solidly on communion, I should give you, Theotime, a just idea of the Holy Eucharist, of the great effects which it produces in those who approach to it worthily, and of the dispositions with which it should be received. But in a subject so incomprehensible, I am stopped at the first outset. For who

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could explain to you the sublimity, the extent, the depth of that love which Jesus Christ testifies to you in this august sacrament*? It is neither the manna of the desert, nor the blood of victims, nor the sumptuous banquet of Assuerus with which he presents you: it is his body, it is his own blood, it is his divinity which he offers you. That Word who existed before all ages, who with a word created and animated all nature, who is God of God, Light of Light, and fully consubstantial to him who engenders him before the day-star in the brightness of the saints; it is that eternal Word who gives himself to you, who accounts it his delight to dwell in your heart†, and who takes pleasure in inundating it with his graces. Meditate on this favour; employ a whole eternity upon it. Compare the greatness of the God-Man with your weakness, his infinite holiness with your sins, his ardent love of you with your insensibility towards him. Weigh all this well in the balance of your heart‡. What will you do, but remain at first motionless in admiration, and finally exclaim: How great are thy works, O God! How incomprehensible are thy ways! How prodigious is thy love for

* Quæ sit latitudo, et longitudo, et sublimitas, et profundum, &c. *Ephes.* iii. 18.

† Deliciæ meæ esse cum filiis hominum. *Prov.* viii. 31.

‡ Hæc in statera cordis vestræ appendite.
Toto vobis figatur in corde, &c. *August.*

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me! Formerly thou didst feed thy people with food destined for thy angels; thou didst cause a delicious bread to rain down upon them*: but what comparison is there between this bread so celebrated and that which thou givest us in thy Blessed Sacrament? Ah! my Lord, how delicious is thy chalice! How worthy of thy magnificence is the food which thou preparest for thy elect†! Who am I, O my Saviour, to partake of it! What communication can there be between thee and me, who am doubly dust and ashes, by the condition of my being, and by a lengthened chain of iniquities; and ought I not to say to thee like the chief of thy apostles: O God of holiness, depart from me, who am nothing but a miserable sinner‡. *Quis ego*, said St. Augustin, *qualis ego, quid non mali ego?*

II. These sentiments are just; but, Theotime, they must be tempered with confidence. This God, whose holiness and greatness terrify you, is the same who invites you and presses you to approach him. It is he who says to you in the tenderest manner: Come to me, all you who suffer and groan beneath a burden

* Angelorum escâ nutrivisti populum tuum: et paratum panem de cœlo præstitisti illis, &c. *Sap.* xvi.

† Calix meus inebrians, quàm præclarus est! *Ps.* xxii. 5.—Quid bonum ejus est, et quid pulchrum ejus, nisi frumentum electorum. *Zach.* ix.

‡ Exi à me, quia homo peccator sum, Domine. *S. Luc.* v. 8.

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which oppresses you, and I will refresh you*. He goes yet farther: in order to compel you in some measure to profit by his favours, he commands you to enter the banqueting room. He is not contented with saying to you, as formerly: *Come, my friends, eat, drink, and be inebriated*†; he adds in precise terms: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you‡.

III. But even if he had left the use of this signal favour, which he is pleased to bestow upon us, to our own free disposal entirely, we could not, without being unfaithful to his love and opposing our own interests, refuse to profit by it. Consider well the greatness of him who invites you to his table. Reflect a moment on the graces which he communicates to those, who are seated there in the wedding garment, and you will see very readily that communion unites us intimately with Jesus Christ: that it consequently represses concupiscence and the passions which would separate us from him; that it fortifies us against the snares and assaults of the enemy, and that, in short, it is to us a pledge of a happy immor-

* Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos. *S. Matth.* xi. 26.

† Comedite, amici, bibite, et inebriamini, charissimi, &c. *Cantic.* v. 1.

‡ Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii Hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis. *S. Joan.* vi. 55.

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tality. I say but a few words to you, as I am accustomed to do, upon each of these truths. I could tell you, as St. Paul told his disciple Timoty, that you have learnt all these from your childhood; and I doubt not that grace has still further instructed you in them in a more efficacious and persuasive manner.

IV. The B. Eucharist unites us intimately to Jesus Christ. It is not only an union of charity, it is an union of substance. Is it not then true, that it is his own flesh which is in some measure united and incorporated with yours; that it is his blood which runs with yours in your veins; and that, as Tertullian has expressed it with that energy which was peculiarly his own*, it is with God himself that your soul is fed and fattened? Yes†, says St. Chrysostom, by communion we become one body with Jesus Christ, our members are composed of his flesh and his bones; and it is in order that we may not only be so united to him by charity, but truly and really, that he was pleased to become our food. It is not, continues St. Augustin, that he changes us into himself; but he changes himself into

* Dum caro corpore et sanguine Christi vescitur, de Deo anima saginatur. *Tertul. de resur. carnis ch.* 8.

† Unum corpus efficimur, membra ex carne et ex ossibus ejus Ut autem non tantùm charitate hoc fiamus, verum etiam ipsâ re in illam commisceamur carnem, hoc per escam efficitur quam nobis largitus est. *Chrysost. Hom.* 61 *ad popul. Antioch.*

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us: *sed tu mutaberis in me.* Ah! Theotime, did we but know the value of this union, or rather of this *deifying* unity, what should we not do to procure it? What an honour to become members of Jesus Christ, to make but one body with him, to be made partakers of the divine nature! Celestial spirits, envy the happiness of man: the Word assumed his nature when he became incarnate, he did not assume yours: he becomes one flesh with him by communion; it is an advantage on which you may congratulate him, but to which you cannot pretend.

V. The Holy Eucharist represses concupiscence in our souls, and all those passions which would separate us from the God-Man. It is a consequence which naturally results from our union with him. I know that this unhappy focus, which, by its own attraction, draws the children of Adam into sin, remains in them even to the end; because it is the will of God, that in multiplying their victories they may increase their crowns. But after all, what have they to fear, or to speak more justly, what have they not to hope as long as they remain in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ remains in them? He sometimes appears to sleep; but his heart, like that of the spouse in the canticles, watches over them. He guards them as the apple of his eye. Impure clouds arise in their imagination; hell presents itself to them with all its frightful spectres; they find themselves in that painful and humiliating



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condition, of which St. Jerome, speaking of himself, has given us so sad a description. When, after the tempest, a calm returns in their interior, they very naturally exclaim with a great saint: Where wert thou, my Saviour, whilst I was the sport of so many abominations? But this same Saviour will reply to them as he did to her: I was with you and within you; I was on your right hand, that you might not be moved*. It was in me and by me that you combated; it was in me and by me that you triumphed. Continue to answer my love by yours; and if you are in the midst of a more fiery furnace than that of Babylon, its flames will respect you as they respected the three children who were thrown into it†. The reason is, Theotime, that the Blessed Eucharist, when it is received into a heart well prepared, not only deadens, or, at least, renders harmless the arrows of concupiscence, but has also the gift of fortifying us against the most violent assaults of the devil; and, in making us victorious over this domestic enemy, which each one of us carries about with him, it renders us still further victorious over the most cruel efforts of our foreign enemy.

* Dominus à dextris est mihi ne commovear. *Psalm.* xv. 8.

† Cum ambulaveris in igne non combureris, et flamma non ardebit in te. *Isa.* xliii. 2. *Vide caput* 3 *Danielis.*

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VI. Whilst the Neroes, the Domitians, and other like monsters ravaged the Church, like cruel wild beasts, it was a spectacle worthy of admiration, both for the first Christians, and still more for the pagans, to see a young person of distinguished birth, in the flower of her age, seconded by the graces of nature and the advantages of fortune, an Agnes, a Catharine*, reject with disdain the most noble alliances, and brave the most frightful punishments. It was something very surprising to see a father, whom his tenderest friends, desolate children, and a wife dying with grief and prostrate at his feet, conjured by all the moving ties of nature to dissemble his faith, and to spare them the last of afflictions; harden himself against such earnest solicitations, and ascend, with dry eyes and an air of tranquil composure, the scaffold on which he was about to be cruelly immolated. It was, in fine, a very novel prodigy for the pretended wisdom of Rome and Athens, to see a young man delicately brought up, stretched out over burning coals, torn with red hot pincers by merciless executioners, and dying a thousand times over, remain notwithstanding firm in his faith, without being any more hurt than if his body had been brass, or his heart absolutely insensible. But whence then did they enjoy a constancy,

* St. Agnes suffered at the age of 12 or 13 years, towards the year 303 of the Christian æra. St. Catherine suffered likewise in the 4th century.



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an intrepidity, so superior to the strength of nature? Was it from their own resources that they derived it? Doubtless it was not. It was, say the holy fathers, from the blood of Jesus Christ, which the Church gave them to drink, and whose sweet and holy intoxication deadened the pain which so long and such cruel torments would naturally cause; in a word, it was from the Eucharist that they drew it. No, said St. Cyprian, we do not expose without arms and without help those whom we exhort to combat against tyrants and persecutors. We fortify them with the body and blood of Jesus Christ*. There they find a buckler, against which the most fiery darts of the enemy are extinguished†. Under the protection of this buckler, more impenetrable than those which were hung up in the tower of David‡, very far from fearing the fire or the bite of lions, they are only fearful of not being judged worthy of them; and the news of their deliverance would be to them the most afflicting intelligence. I conjure you, brethren, said one of the most illustrious martyrs which the

* Quos excitamus et hortamur ad prælium, non inermes nudosque relinquimus, sed protectione corporis et sanguinis Christi muniamus. *Cyprian. Ep.* 45 *ad Cornelium.*

† In quo possitis tela nequissimi ignea extinguere. *Ephes.* vi. 16.

‡ Turris David····mille clypei pendent ex eâ, omnis armatura fortium. *Cantic.* iv. *v. eod.*

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Church witnessed in her brightest days; I conjure you not to obtain by your prayers, that the beasts, to which I am condemned, may spare me, as it has happened to others. I know how important it is for me to be ground by the teeth of lions. If they spare me, I will offer them violence, I will provoke them against me. This day do I begin to be a disciple of my Saviour. I desire him alone, I seek him alone, he is the sole object of my love. Fires, crosses, savage beasts, I do not fear you. Let my bones be broken, let my limbs be torn asunder, let my body be ground to powder, let hell and all its torments burst upon me; all is good to me, provided I have the happiness to enjoy Jesus Christ *.

VII. Such were the sentiments with which the Holy Eucharist inspired the first champions of religion. You will not need them for martyrdom: that is a grace which in all probability is not prepared for you. But you may have need of them to support the pains and contradictions, which grow beneath our feet in this valley of tears, and still more beneath the feet of all those who desire to live in piety *. You will have to support them in

* Ignis, crux, bestiæ, confractio ossium, membrorum divisio, et totius corporis contritio, et tota tormenta diaboli in me veniant: tantum Christo fruar. *S. Ignat. Mart. Ep. ad Rom.*

† Omnes qui piè volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur. 2 *Tim.* iii. 12.



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the course of your studies, very often from a fellow-student, who will be displeased with you precisely because you will do your utmost to be well-pleasing to God; and sometimes from a master, whom artifice and calumny shall have prejudiced against you, as it happened to young Boudon*. You will have to encounter them even in the bosom of your family, either from a sister, who will find a censure upon her own conduct in the regularity of yours; or from one or more brothers, who envy you the predilection which you deserve, as it happened of old to Joseph. You will have them in the occupations to which Providence destines you, and in which your virtue, when honoured by the confidence of superiors, will arm unworthy rivals against you, who will meditate nothing but your ruin, as was the fate of Daniel and his companions. In all these different conjunctures, you have an assured remedy in the holy communion. All that is produced in the martyrs, is an earnest of what it will operate in you. It will fortify you against all these trials: it will do more, it will even render them delightful to you. By means of it, you will live in peace the life of Jesus Christ, which was indeed a life of crosses and mortifications: but this painful life will be to you a germ of a blisful

* See the new Life of M. Boudon, (Paris 176?) liv. 1, pag. 33, et suiv. See also the xxxviith chap. of Genesis and Daniel chap. iii. 5 and 14.

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immortality: *Potissimum futuræ felicitatis indicium*, says St. Laurence Justinian, *certum divinæ miserationis præsagium.* The Son of God has pledged his word for it, and this should abundantly satisfy us. Your fathers, said he to the Jews, did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. He that eateth my flesh, hath everlasting life.

VIII. But the Eucharist only produces these great effects, when it is approached with good and holy dispositions. If a communion well made is the greatest happiness which a man can possess, a sacrilegious communion is the most fulminating anathema that he can draw down upon his head. The Apostle St. Paul has declared it in these terrible words: *Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord* *. That is to say, he shall not be less guilty than if he had caused his death, and had himself shed his blood; that is to say, still further, that by using this food with as little precaution as if it were ordinary nourishment, *he eats and drinks his own judgment.* This is the short, but frightful comment, which the Apostle makes upon his own text. Meditate upon it at your

* Quicumque manducaverit panem hunc, vel biberit calicem Domini indignè, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini.....Qui enim manducat et et bibit indignè, judicium sibi manducat et bibit, non dijudicans corpus Domini. 1 *Cor.* xi. 27 *et* 29.

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leisure, Theotime, and see by yourself, or by persons more enlightend than you are at present, if in the whole Scripture you can find any thing so appalling as those words, till then unknown: *he eats and drinks judgment to himself.* "You know," *says a late writer,* "that food is inseparable from him who takes "it. I have eaten bread: this food is chang- "ed into my blood and my flesh: it becomes "one thing with me; so that there is no "longer any means of dividing them. Who- "ever has made an unworthy communion, has "eaten his own judgment; he has, in a man- "ner, changed it into himself. You might sup- "pose that the apostle alludes to the custom of "those ancient judges who made their crimi- "nals swallow the decree of their condemna- "tion, to signify that it was irrevocable. Have "I sufficiently explained myself, and do you "conceive the force of this expression: *judici- "um sibi manducat et bibit?* Ah, my God! "if the judgment was only written on paper, "it might be cancelled and torn in pieces. If "it was only pronounced, it might be revok- "ed. If it were only put into the mouth, the "evil would not be irremediable, for it might "be cast forth again. But when it is eaten "and has passed into our veins, and, as the "prophet says, it has insinuated itself into "the marrow of our bones, and is changed in- "to our own substance, how can it be recall- "ed? If the judgment and the criminal were "not the same thing, God could annihilate

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" the one, and pardon the other. But when " they are confounded, and no longer distin- " guished from each other, the execution of " the first bears inevitably with it the eternal " condemnation of the second. Cruel and pi- " tiable lot of those who make an unworthy " communion !"

IX. Do you wish, and I cannot doubt that you do wish to prevent this unhappiness, return, then, Theotime, to this great lesson of the same apostle: *Probet s. ipsum homo, et sic de pane illo edat, et de calice bibat.* Let a man prove himself, and let it only be after a just probation that he dares to feed on this heavenly bread. Let him not forget, that a prodigious number of Bethsamites were destroyed, because they cast an unguarded look upon the holy ark, and that Osa was struck dead, because he put forth his hand to support it. But let him also remember, that Obededom, who received it into his house with sentiments of religion and piety, was loaded with blessings. These severe chastisements on the one hand, and these signal favours on the other, will produce in him a happy mixture of fear and confidence. If he fears with reason, lest he should receive without due dispositions, this food, which is death to the wicked, he will not be less fearful of depriving himself of this salutary food, which gives life to the good, and becomes to them a source of water springing up to eternal life. He will seriously examine his conscience. He will humble himself on account of

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his faults: he will pour them with just sorrow into the bosom of a faithful minister. He will rekindle his half-extinguished faith; and by the help of the holy love which will begin to rule in his heart, he will conceive a firm hope of finding grace and life, in a sacrament which was established for the sole purpose of increasing both. In these dispostions, he will exclaim with the pious author of a book which will never be sufficiently admired: "Confiding "in thy goodness and great mercy, O Lord, I "come as one sick to my physician and Savi- "our, hungry and thirsty to the Fountain of "Life, needy to the King of Heaven, a slave "to his Master, a creature to his Creator, "and one in desolation to his lovely Com- "forter*."

X. To these preliminary instructions I will add some others, which cannot appear too minute on a subject so interesting. I extract them almost word for word from a work with which you must be well acquainted†.

When you expect to communicate, beg of God the grace to dispose yourself for it in the best manner possible. Entertain yourself the evening before, with the happiness you are to have in the morning. Retrench some little of your supper at night, if it be only a little fruit or a glass of water.

During your recreation, avoid every thing

* Following of Christ, B. 4. ch. 2.
† Instruction of Youth, part 2. c. 10.

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which might too much dissipate your thoughts. If you can join some confidential friends, whose sentiments are like your own, inform them, like the Spouse in the Canticle, that your heart is languishing with love. If your heart is wounded with holy love, you will speak of it willingly : *Ex abundantiâ enim cordis os loquitur.* Matt. xii. 34.

"During the whole morning, keep your "mind very devoutly recollected in the thought "of the great action you have to perform, and "often say in your heart what David said, "when he thought of building a temple to the "Lord : this is a great work ; for it is not for "man, but for God himself, that I am to pre- "pare a dwelling-place ; *Opus grande est: "neque enim homini præparatur habitatio sed "Deo.* Yes, Theotime, it is for Jesus Christ, "true God and true man, that you are pre- "paring a habitation in your soul; you must "therefore prepare one worthy of him.

"Repair to the church early in the morn- "ing to say your prayers, and go to confessi- "on, if you have not made it the evening be- "fore. After having obtained leave of your "director, you will prepare yourself in this "manner for about half an hour.

"You will humble yourself profoundly be- "fore our Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledging "yourself unworthy to receive him : unworthy, "on account of his greatness and holiness ; "unworthy, because of your sins. Is it then "possible, said Solomon after building the

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" temple, that God should dwell with men? " *Ergone credibile est ut habitet Deus cum ho-* " *minibus ?* Say the same of yourself, and let " this sentiment lead you to a fresh act of sor- " row for your sins.

" Beg of him the grace to receive him wor- " thily, that is, with a pure conscience, a " lively faith, a profound humility, an ardent " love, and an inviolable resolution to serve " him faithfully for the remainder of your life. " You may recite the prayer at the beginning " of this little book, but you must recite it with " attention and feeling devotion.

" When the time of communion is come, " leave all vocal prayers, to abandon yourself " only to the transports of your love. Ap- " proach the altar with great modesty, with " your eyes cast down, without looking on one " side or the other, without pressing to come " first, but letting the crowd pass, if there be " any.

" Being on your knees, adore from the " bottom of your heart that God-Man who is " coming to give himself to you: and after " saying the *Confiteor* and the *Domine non sum* " *dignus,* with a true sentiment of your un- " worthiness, receive with a firm faith and " most profound humility the God of heaven, " and Saviour of your soul.

" Returning from the holy table, do not " presently take your book to pray, but enter- " tain yourself some time inwardly with your " Beloved. 1st, Adore his infinite greatness.

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"2dly, Say to him with sentiments of admi-
" ration, what the mother of St. John the
" Baptist said to the Blessed Virgin: *Whence is*
" *this to me, that my God should come to visit me?*
" Acknowlege that you are most unworthy of
" this favour. 3dly, Beg of him again the
" pardon of your sins. Conceive a fresh sor-
" row for having offended a God who gives
" himself to you with so much love and good-
" ness. Protest to him, that you will love
" him for ever, and that you will never be
" separated from him. 4thly, Represent to
" him the wants of your soul. Ask of him
" those graces which are most necessary for
" you to resist temptations, to avoid bad
" company, and the occasions of offending
" him; to cure your evil habits, and advance
" you in virtue. 5thly, Thank him for the
" favour he has granted you, in giving you
" himself; and in return for this inestimable
" benefit, offer him your soul, your powers,
" your life, and all that you can do, to love
" him and serve him for ever." If you can-
not give a great deal of time to these different acts, make them at least with a great deal of fervour.

"Return home with great modesty. Let
" all the rest of the day savour of so holy an
" action." Modesty, recollection, tender aspirations to Jesus Christ, the object and principle of your love, must naturally follow a good communion. "Assist at the sermon,



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" and at vespers if you have it in your power, " and give about an hour to spiritual read- " ing." The fourth book of *The Following of Christ* will furnish you with very fine matter for reading. " Converse not much with others, " except with pious persons; entertain your- " self with religious conversation, and let this " be your chief recreation for so precious a " day."

XI. These, Theotime, are instructions given to young people by a man who was for a long time at the head of a celebrated college *; and these are lessons which love alone leads some scholars to practise, who have perhaps never read them. Of this you have an example equally sensible and affecting in the life of young Daumond. A thirsty stag pants less after a brook where it may allay its thirst, than this amiable child longed for the moment when he should have the happiness to make his first communion. The delights which overflowed his heart when he had this happiness, inflamed him with new desires. He

* Charles Gobinet, born at St. Quentin, first Principal of the College of Plessis Sorbonne, which he edified exceedingly. A person having said to him very imprudently, a little before his death: *Quam terribile est incidere in manus Dei viventis!* he replied: *Quam dulce est incidere in manus Jesu Christi pro homine morientis!* He died a moment after, on the 9th of December, 1690, aged 77 years.

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thought of nothing but this heavenly food. He communicated regularly every Sunday. He approached likewise on great festivals, and on the feasts of the Blessed Virgin. He often used to say, that none but a heart absolutely insensible can be without desiring to be united to Jesus Christ in this mystery of love. He used to add, that he could not conceive how a person, on the day when he had had the happiness to communicate, could dwell on any other thought, than the love which our Saviour bears us, and which we ought to have for him. Hence, though he was always very interior and recollected, it was easily perceived that he was more so than usual on those days, and that he employed in prayer and contemplation almost all the time he had to spare from his studies. In his last sickness, he could only alleviate his pains with the hope he entertained of receiving once more the Beloved of his heart. When it was told him, that his Beloved was approaching to visit him, the joy which beamed upon his countenance proved the eagerness of his desire. He received the viaticum of salvation with that tender devotion which he was accustomed to do, and which his infirm state could not in the least diminish. His fervour appeared, and diffused itself over his exterior in so striking a manner, that the greater part of the assistants could not refrain from tears.

Thus died this holy youth, who, although



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he was *made perfect in a short space*, yet *fulfilled a long time**. His conduct, and the graces with which God rewarded it, will of themselves decide for you, that *nothing is better, nothing is more profitable, than to communicate often, and that it should be recommended to all those who live in so holy a manner as to be properly disposed for it.* Let then a Christian so live as to be able to approach every day †. But, alas! if God does not stop the torrent of evil which is ravaging every age, people will soon live in such a manner as not to be fit to approach every year.

*Prayer.*

I BEGIN, O Lord, to know the inestimable value of the favour thou grantest to man, in giving him thyself. All-powerful; and God as thou art, thou couldst do nothing more than thou dost for a vile creature, in the ineffable sacrament of thy love. Is there in the world

* Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa, *Sap.* iv. 13. John James Daumond died at Toulouse on the 15th of August, 1744, aged a little less than 14 years.

† Sic vive, ut quotidie merearis accipere. Qui non meretur accipere quotidie, non mereter post annum accipere. *Autor. lib. de Eccl. Dogmat. apud August.* See the Cat. de Montpellier, part 3. sec. 1. ch. 4, 5, 7.

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a shepherd who loves his flock so excessively ss to feed them with his own blood*? This prodigy of tenderness was reserved for thee, my Saviour! and let the whole earth testify its gratitude. Let Sion celebrate with hymns and canticles thy infinite mercy. Let Jerusalem make thee vows, and be faithful in accomplishing them. Thy true servants have done it in all ages and times. It was by the strength which they derived from the divine food of thy sacred body, that they walked, like Elias, even to the mountain of Horeb†. It was in thy blood that weak virgins found that invincible courage which rendered them victorious over hell and all its torments. Whence comes it then, O Lord, that I have till now forgotten thee, and have not profited by so precious a treasure? Thou didst invite me equally with others. I was of the number of those to whom thou didst stretch out thy hands. My own wants solicited me as much as thy gracious words. Notwithstanding so many reasons for approaching thy banquet, I have uniformly kept at a distance from it. Fatal and mortal indifference, thou hast been the cause of all my misfortunes. My flesh is

* Quis pastor oves proprio pascit cruore ....? ipse autem *Christus* nos proprio pascit sanguine. *Chrysost. Hom.* 89 *in Matth.*

† Ambulavit in fortitudine cibi illius.... usque in montem Dei Horeb. 3 *Reg.* xix. 8.



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parched, my heart has fainted away, because I forgot to eat the bread which was appointed to nourish me *. At length, my God, I am resolved to change my conduct. It is the resolution I always make; grant that at length I may execute it in a manner answerable to the designs of thy mercy. I will prove myself according to the law which thou hast imposed upon me by one of thy apostles. It shall only be after a just and impartial trial that I will present myself at thy sacred table.

But, O Lord, I present myself there with confidence. I am poor, naked, and indigent: thou art the riches of the world. the treasure of the universe. I am plunged in an ocean of bitterness: thou art the great, the true, the only Comforter. I am infirm and languishing, and thou art that physician, who needs only one word to cure the most inveterate and hopeless maladies. O earth, bury not in thy bosom a single drop of the adorable blood of my Saviour †: I will turn it all to profit. Come, then, and enter into me, my amiable Jesus; come, and do not delay ‡. Assist me to prepare for thee an habitation in my heart, which may not be unworthy of thee. It is on thee and by thee that I desire to live: why am I

* Aruit cor meum, quia oblitus sum comedere panem meum. *Ps.* ci.

† Terra, ne operias sanguinem *Justi*. *Job* xvi. 19.

‡ Veni Domine Jesu, et noli tardare. *Imit. ex cap.* xxii. *Apocal.* v. 20.

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not permitted to die for thee? *Ecce ego ad te venio, Domine, ut bene sit mihi ex munere tuo, ut lætificer in convivio sancto tuo, quod parasti in dulcedine tua, pauperi, Deus.... Tu salus mea et redemptio: tu spes et fortitudo: tu Deus et gloria mea.* Lib. 4. de Imit. cap. 3.

## § 3. OF THE OBSTACLES WHICH HINDER YOUTH FROM FREQUENTING THE SACRAMENTS.

WHEN we consider that Penance and the Holy Eucharist are sources of grace; that nothing is sweeter or more consoling, than to receive them in a proper manner; that the dispositions requisite to approach them do not surpass the power of man; that the unction of the Holy Spirit sweetens whatever is painful in them; and that by a few courageous efforts we soon reap in joy what we have sown in tears: we are surprised to see, on the one hand, so many crowns, and on the other so few combatants, who enter the lists to bear them away. Let us examine, I beseech you, Theotime, the motives of so unreasonable a proceeding. It is never so easy to stop the progress of evil, as when we are acquainted with its principle.

I. It may be said in general, that the little love we feel for Almighty God is the principle cause of this fatal indifference. This Supreme Being is almost as little thought of, as if there was nothing to be expected from his

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goodness, or feared from his justice. He is served for the greater part of our time with an indifference which seems little better than contempt. Even those who flatter themselves that they live with a certain regularity, and think they entertain the greatest horror of mortal sin, live on in tranquillity, in so manifest a state of lukewarmness, that they themselves are the only ones who do not perceive it. Nevertheless, Theotime, this lukewarmness is indeed one of the greatest evils that can happen to us. Listen to what is said of it to the Bishop of Laodicea, by him who is the *faithful witness*, and whose mouth always speaks the language of the most exact truth : *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would that thou wert either cold or hot ; but because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth**, These are words so alarming, that in every age they have made the most upright tremble. The state of mortal sin, preferred under the name of coldness to the state of a certain spiritual languor expressed by lukewarmness, is something so terrible for the generality of the faithful, that there is hardly one to be found who can support the idea of it. It is not for me, however,

* Hæc dicit : Amen, testis fidelis et verus. .... Scio opera tna, quia neque frigidus es, neque calidus : utinam frigidus esses aut calidus ; sed quia tepidus es....incipiam te evomere ex ore meo, *Apocal.* iii. 14 *et seq.*

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to justify this terrifying maxim. Coming as it does from Jesus Christ, it carries its proof along with it. Nevertheless, it would be but too easy, my dear child, to make you sensible, both by reason and experience, that it is perfectly worthy of him who has advanced it. I have said it in another work, and at much greater length; the man who is cold is a subject banished, a domestic dismissed, a servant who is no longer seen, who appears no more, and with whom there is no more intercourse. Abandoned to his unhappy fate, he does what he pleases, without any one interesting himself in his actions, *non irascar amplius*, I will not be angry any more, says God himself; and this is the most terrible degree of his retribution. A lukewarm man, on the contrary, is still under the eyes of his Master: oftentimes even he occupies a distinguished place: he can still serve; he appears even desirous of making himself useful. But he does every thing, or nearly every thing, without any love, without relish without affection. He takes what gives him little trouble; he leaves what would cost him more pains. The routine of habit supports him for a time, and human respect holds him on a little longer, as I shall explain hereafter. When these two fail him, he follows the natural bent of his disposition. Before he was an invalid, who made some efforts to walk; but soon after, he does not think of dragging himself along. What do I say? He

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is even pleased with his condition, and he would not move a straw to be delivered from it.

II. But whence arises this indifference towards a God, who is the only one who truly loves us, and perhaps the only one whom we have not loved? It sometimes proceeds from an excessive love of study, but oftener from a spirit of dissipation, from bad connections, human respect, and the contempt of small things. Follow after me, Theotime, I am going to run through these several sources so rapidly, that were you less virtuous than you are, you would not find me tiresome.

III. A little love for God, a kind of insensibility towards him, sometimes proceeds from an excessive passion for study. It has been always said, and nothing is more true, that study is a burning water, which dries up the ground on which it is poured. We desire to know, we wish to surpass others; we succeed in our endeavours, or at least we imagine so: science, and God knows what kind of science, the pride which but too often accompanies success, all unite in carrying a man away, and elevating him above himself. He forgets every thing but his books. He neither thinks of him from whom he has received his feeble talents, nor of the homage he is bound to return for them. He refers to him neither the progress he makes, nor the praises with which it is crowned. His passion, which,

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however exalted in its nature, is still a passion, follows him every where. He bears it with him in his prayers: he carries it to the threshold of the sanctuary; and sometimes, in a more advanced age, it ascends with him even to the altar. If ever he stands up as a man of learning, wo be to him who shall dare to attack him. Right or wrong, he will always know how to reply. If proofs fail, invectives, and even sarcasm, will be employed by him in place of demonstrations. To find two men of learning, who, in a literary dispute, will preserve any measure, I do not say of religion, but of simple decorum, we must look over whole centuries. The vast erudition of Mabillon *, joined to a profound humility, is a phenomena which appears only once in a hundred years. What then would you think, were I to shew you that they will go so far, if they are urged, as even to sap the foundations of religion, rather than abandon a system with which they are infatuated †. Can you believe indeed, that

* Dom John Mabillon was as celebrated for his humility as his vast erudition: both are equaliy apparent in the discussion he had with the illustrious reformer of La Trappe, Armand le Bouthillier de Rancé. F. Mabillon died on the 27th of December, 1707, at the age of 76.

† We have seen a melancholy example of this in F. Hardouin. See at the end a curious piece against him.

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so much bitterness, so many unbecoming sallies of temper, not to say little fits of fury, are very compatible with the spirit of a true and tender devotion? I leave it to the decision of Him who will judge us all. But I very much fear, that with such dispositions, some will forsake the use of the sacraments altogether, and others will continue to frequent them merely as a matter of form, and with hardly any feeling of devotion. Knowledge puffs up, says the Apostle: inflation and pride accord very ill with piety.

If I have been somewhat too diffuse upon this first fault, I mean an excessive love of study, it is not because I think it very common, but because I could wish to retrench them all. The following are very different, and more common. They need not be discussed at great length.

IV. I begin with dissipation of the mind and heart. It is but too certain, that this is one of the causes which most impedes the frequentation of the sacraments. A student, after having hurried over his task, is occupied about a thousand trifles, which succeed each other without interruption. The reading of romances, which had nearly proved fatal to St. Teresa; frequent walks with company, in which the smallest evil is an entire forgetfulness of God; the excessive pursuit of bodily exercises; gaming, which from pleasure passes into a habit, and from a habit becomes a passion; plays, even such as are relished on-

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ly by the lowest people, and where cold equivocation is substituted for thought and genius; all these miserable fooleries occupy him by turns, enchant him, and transport him out of himself. Their seducing phantom follows him even in his sleep. If he were capable of reflecting, he would soon see with how much reason the Holy Spirit hath declared, that *the bewitching of vanity obscure the good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind* *. In this state, he is rendered incapable of every serious action: thus he makes no more or hardly any examination of conscience; he approaches no more to the sacraments, neither the Holy Eucharist, nor even Penance. If he sometimes comes to the sacred tribunal, it is because the law of the college requires it: the love of God, and a desire of entering into himself, have no part in it. Wait but a few years, and you will see where all this will terminate. Alas! I say, like the Apostle†, with deep sorrow, the evil is sometimes already so deeply rooted, that nothing less than a miracle can cure it.

V. Bad company and connections are another great obstacle to the frequentation of the sacraments. A young man goes as it were of his own accord to piety. The good

* Fascinatio nugacitatis obscurat bona, et inconstantia concupiscentia transvertit sensum sine malitia. *Sapient.* iv. 12.

† Nunc autem et flens dico, *Phil.* iii. 18.



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lessons he has received from a virtuous father, the great examples he has found in his family, where a holy mother has a hundred times repeated to him what Blanche of Castile said to her son*; the wholesome advice given him by a wise director, to whom on his first arrival he gave his confidence; all this joined to a happy natural disposition, disposed him to be a model of virtue. He falls unhappily into the hands of a fellow-countryman, who gains him over by endeavouring to amuse him, by a pretended affection for him, by offers to serve him, which he will not and cannot put in execution; and he is already half undone, and very soon entirely ruined. In order to hinder others from ridiculing his piety he will ridicule the piety of others. On this cruel condition he will purchase peace. No more returns to his own interior, no more disquietude upon faults, of which the very idea would before have made him shudder; no more sacraments, no more virtue. But I have already spoken to you so much at length on the danger of bad company, that I could not return to it here, without abusing your patience.

VI. Human respect produces two very different effects in regard of communion. Some-

* Blanche of Castile, the mother of St. Louis, often said to him: God is my witness of the tenderness I feel for you But I would rather see you dead before my eyes, than see you dead in the eyes of God by one mortal sin.

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times it is the cause of bad communion; sometimes it prevents good ones. The first misfortune happens in houses where frequent communion is practised; the second takes place in those, where people hardly communicate at all, and where those who lead the way by the ascendancy they have acquired over others, being public enemies to so holy a practice, will not suffer it to be introduced.

A student who fears God, is careful to avoid these two excesses. He does not purchase the reputation of a virtuous man by a monstrous sacrilege. He exerts himself as much as possible to follow the common custom: he endeavours to break his chains; but before he accomplishes this, he remains at the bottom of the temple, like the publican; and he thinks himself happy to be suffered to be there. He may even rely on it, and this is what cannot be too much attended to, that he loses nothing in the estimation of an intelligent superior. Some doubts upon faith, some troubles almost involuntary, an excessive fear of doing wrong, sometimes prove obstacles to a youth who, in in reality, has more purity and more solid virtue than many others. In general, superiors should in a manner not notice whether young people communicate or not, and communion should be with them the freest thing in the world. Let them recommend it, but let them never appear to command it.



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As for not communicating when you are authorized to do it by your confessor, because by approaching to communion, you will displease a party of libertines, who cannot bear that you should be distinguishsd from them; this is a weakness which must be overcome by the recollection, that Jesus Christ will be ashamed of those before his Father, who shall have been ashamed of him before men. If ever you have found yourself iu this case, arm yourself with a holy courage, my dear Theotime, and be bold enough to prevent the power of prescription. Lift high the standard of Jesus Christ, and take my word for it, you will soon have many followers. I have seen a whole college reformed in this particular by a young prince, who was not witheld by the evil custom of the place. His conduct at first occasioned a little sensation. Afterwards, it was admired; and shortly after it was imitated. Such is the great good produced by good example. Should it so happen that you have to deal with companions as wicked as the pretended monks of Subiaco*, you must then remove elsewhere for the exercise of your de-

* They wanted to poison St. Benedict, because they found his morality too severe. The monastery of Subiaco is between two high mountains, thirteen or fourteen leagues from Rome. I had the happiness, in 1757, to say mass there in the cavern which served as a cell for this holy patriarch of the western monks.

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votion. Daniel adores in secret, when he is not permitted to do it publicly.

VI. One thing which I conjure you not to lose sight of, either during the rest of your studies, or the whole course of your life, is that the neglect and contempt of small things, as well as paying little attention to small faults, leads imperceptibly on to the forgetfulness of God, and keepe us at a distance from those sacred mysteries which would bring us near to him. Nothing is more common, but nothing is at the same time better established by experience, than that sentence af the Holy Ghost: *He that depises small things, shall fall by little and little* *. The Son of God, who is the Eternal Wisdom, found it so important, that he judged it necessary to repeat it in the gospel: he is not contented with saying, that he who is faithful in small things will also be faithful in great ones; he adds, that we shall be unfaithful in greater things, if we want fidelity in those which are lesser †. And I assure you, that to believe this truth, it was not necessary to have it consecrated by so great an authority. From the beginning of the world, there have been many falls in all ranks and conditions, and they have been of every

* *Eccli.* xix. 1.

† Qui fidelis est in minimo, et in majori fidelis est: et qui in modico iniquus est, et in majori iniquus est. *S. Luc.* xvi. 10.



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kind. All of these, morally speaking, had beginnings which did not predict them. It only requires a spark, to produce a conflagration which could reduce the greatest forests to ashes *. He who is so merciful, as to recompense a cup of cold water given in his name, is so just likewise, that he will punish a small fault committed against him. David, through a sentiment of pride, commands his people to be numbered; Ezechias, in the same feeling, shews all his treasures to the ambassadors of the King of Babylon: history informs us with what severity the hand of God struck these two princes, either in the persons of their people, or those of their successors. You omit a small practice of piety; you reject a slight inspiration of grace; and you thereby deserve that God should diminish it towards you on a more important occasion. By this means one fault leads you on to another more considerable; this leads you to a third, and sometimes all together conducts you to the bottom of the abyss. Who are you then, weak mortal, to reply against God †, and require him to give you an account of his conduct? Has he not a right to require that you should value his goods as much as

* Ecce quantus (*quantulus*) ignis quam magnam sylvam incendit. *Jacobi* iii. 5.

† O homo, tu quis es, qui respondeas Deo? *Rom.* ix. 20.

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they deserve to be valued? Theotime, never forget these two things; one, that he who fears God neglects nothing that can please him *; the other, that those who fall into the greatest excesses, often begin by the smallest wanderings. You will begin to-day by doing some evil, or by totally neglecting an action of little importance; to-morrow you will fail in a more essential point. The next day, your disgust for virtue will increase; tepidity will take possession of you by degrees; and because you are lukewarm, says God himself in that frightful passage which I have already quoted to you, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth. What a terrible and desolating menace: we cast forth only what the heart can no longer bear; we cast forth, and we never return to what we have once rejected. What would have become of us, O Lord, if thy mercy did not take place of thy judgment; and if, according to the expression of a holy father, thou wert not willing to revoke the decrees, when we are willing to change our conduct? But in order to change, we stand in need of thy grace; and is it likely we should be very faithful to these latter impressions, when we have been accustomed to resist the former ones?

* Qui timet Deum, nihil negligit. *Eccle.* vii. 19. —A minimis incipiunt, qui in maxima prorumpunt.

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*Prayer.*

WHAT enemies have I to conquer, and what obstacles to surmount, in order to be constant in thy service, O my God! But were there even more, I would endeavour to overcome them; *In Deo meo transgrediar murum.* My weakness alarms me, my past infidelities make me fearful of new ones. But I can do all things in him who strengthens me*, and takes pleasure in confirming my steps. His precious blood is more powerful than hell; I will strenuously endeavour to bathe in it often. Hitherto my little love of God, my tepidity, my negligence on an infinity of occasions which I have too much disregarded, have impeded those salutary motions with which grace inspired me. By degrees my courage has abated, my strength is dissipated, my soul is become like earth without water†. Whither art thou gone, my Saviour, whither art thou retired, sweet and tender object of my desires? Vouchsafe to return to me, I will be more faithful to thee than ever. I have injured thee by my lukewarmness; I will make thee amends by the increase of my love. Human respect, the most despicable of all motives, has

* Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat. *Philp.* iv. 13.

† Concussum est cor meum.... Deficit virtus mea....Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi. *Ps.* cxlii. *et alibi passim.*

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often influenced me; thy law, and my real wants, shall be henceforward the sole rule of my conduct. I will neglect nothing which can be pleasing to thee. I will lay hold on the smallest opportunities of testifying my gratitude; and as these continually present themselves, I will give thee continual proofs of it. By following this new method, there will no longer be any obstacles to keep me at a distance from thy holy altar. I shall find there the sweets of heavenly manna, the holy inebriation of the children of God, the source of grace, and the assured pledge of that glory which thou hast prepared for thy elect. *Mens impletur gratiâ, et futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur.*

## CHAP. IX.

### *A young Man should have a profound Respect for Religion.*

I. NEVER, Theotime, never was the instruction which I am now to give you, so necessary as at the present day. Till these days every one believed there was a God; that the heavens serving as a veil before his greatness, announced to us his power and his magnificence; that this supreme Being required, at least from his creatures, what a father requires from his children, and a master from his ser-

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vants; that good and evil were not the same in his eyes; that he rewarded virtue and punished vice, &c. The philosophy of the times has overturned all these principles, or at least has dared to call them in question. If they do not dare to say at once, that the world drew itself out of nothing; that it gave itself this regular form, the wise economy of which we so much admire; that the sun, the moon, the stars are in the firmament by mere chance, by a fortuitous arrangement, in a word, without view and without design; they are daring enough to give us a God who, buried in an indolent kind of happiness, takes no account either of the homage or the contempt of his creatures; who takes no more notice of the actions of man, than of those of the dog which is made for his service; who does not esteem it bad for a father to throw his child into the sea, nor good if he throws himself in to rescue it. This is what, at the present day, is called being a *philosopher:* and with that they preach up natural religion from morning till night. It is a great pity that those, who make themselves its apostles, and who certainly will not become martyrs to it, have not yet reduced it to any settled maxims. The decalogue which they will present us, will be admirably beautiful. Their commandments will be directly opposite to those of all sensible people and nations: *Thou shalt not adore nor love thy God, because he neither cares for thee nor thy love. Thou shalt take his name in vain as often*

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*as thou pleasest, because it is perfectly the same to him, whether his name is profaned, or dishonoured, &c.* Such will be the new code of religion, which will be furnished by these *great men* who have studied nature seriously, and give us nothing but her lessons. Ask them why God created them and placed them in the world: they will reply, that they only received a being in order to spend it in diversion; that that they can do so without drawing upon themselves any bad consequences; that their soul is only a material substance less confined than other matter; that all dies with the body, &c. Go still farther, and ask them to prove a paradox detested even by the Jew, contradicted at Rome as well as at Athens by the Gentile, and the defender of which would be condemned to the flames by the Mahometan; they will alledge reason and reason again. They might as well, and indeed much better, alledge passion, a wish to stifle the voice of conscience in their irregularities, and that fatal blindness with which God afflicts those who grow giddy in their speculations, and from the height of their proud metaphysics consider all the rest of the world as fools.

Prevented as you are by divine grace, gifted with reason more mature than your age, free from those secret passions which are the first springs of unbelief, I do not fear, Theotime, that so monstrous a system will ever take with you. I am only uneasy for two or three of your friends, who will one day find in their

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own house stumbling blocks, and lessons dangerous enough to weaken their faith. Prepare them early for the combat, and through the esteem which they entertain for your virtue, make them thoroughly comprehend, that the religion of Jesus Christ is the only one which offers us security; the only one worthy of God; the only one which can comfort man whilst he is upon earth, that is to say, in an abode, where, being often tried, he has often need of consolation. I only lay before you these motives: you will find them invincibly established in a great number of learned works, which you will read hereafter*.

II. The religion of Jesus Christ is the only one which presents us and makes us embrace security. It teaches us that virtue and vice are two things very different; that after this life there will be another; that there God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. A Christian who acts in consequence of these maxims, endeavours to be a good subject, a good magistrate, a good citizen. He is a faithful husband, a tender father, a charitable master, merciful to the poor, and an enemy to

* Without speaking of those which are more extensive, such as that of M. le François, formerly my scholar, but long since my master; there are excellent things to be found in *La Verité de la Religion Chretienne demontrée*, by M. Denyse; in *La seule Religion veritable*, by F. le Febvre; in *L'Idee de la Vérité et de la Grandeur de la Religion*, by M. L'Abbé du Petit-Chateau.

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detraction. If it should prove after death that heaven and hell are not chimerical ideas, he escapes the torments of the one, and enjoys the eternal delights of the other. It is true that if the whole man dies together, he has not the recompence upon which he had depended. But besides that he dies in peace, which is a great point, he carries with him to the tomb both the regret of his neighbours and the reputation of a virtuous man. This is all he risks; or in other words, he risks nothing.

The unbeliever tells you, on the contrary, and tells you in a decisive tone, that there is neither punishment for vice, nor recompense for virtue. But how does he prove this opinion, which, opposed as it is to the belief of the whole world, and even to the idea we have of the justice of God, will require nothing short of real demonstrations to gain any credit? Is it then impossible for God to recompense virtue and punish crime? Has the impious man who contests it, had any revelation to assure him of the contrary? Does he deserve that Heaven should favour him with lights which he has refused to every one else? Does his general conduct at least give us any reason to judge of him favourably? Can he assure us under the eye of truth, that since he has left off believing he has become any better? Might he not even candidly confess, that it was only because he began to abandon himself to every kind of licentiousness, that he began to believe nothing? On this head we well know to what



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we should adhere. We have never yet seen a Christian, who in the hour of death repented that he lived like a Christian: but we have seen Deists, whom their sublime philosophy has cruelly abandoned in these latter moments, and who have owned that they owed their irreligion to nothing but their libertinism. But after all, if this great and haughty disputant is deceived, and eternity is not a phantom imagined by human policy, but really exists, established by the justice of God, to what does he not expose himself? What a sentence has he to expect? I have already said it, Theotime; in a doubt it will always be the part of wisdom to take the safer side, even if it should cost a little more pains. It remains to ascertain if in reality it does cost more to live a life of virtue, than to abandon oneself to passions which waste the body and degrade the mind. To resolve this question, enquire of Solomon if he was happier in those days of passion, in which, abandoned to all the excesses of impure love, he became the horror and the fable of his own subjects; than he had been in those glorious days, when visibly protected by Heaven, and blessed by his people, his wisdom was a subject of admiration to the universe. But to return to our subject: I told you that the religion of Jesus Christ is the only one which offers us security both for time and eternity. I add that it alone is reasonable and perfectly worthy of God.

III. What does the Christian religion teach

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you? That you have a Father in heaven; that you ought to love him with your whole heart, glorify his name, and wish that it was glorified by all the nations of the earth; to will only what he wills, and regulate your will inviolably according to his; forgive your enemies, that they may forgive you when you have had the misfortune to offend them; to desire earnestly that his kingdom may come, and that delivered from the miseries of this life, and especially from the slavery of sin, which is the greatest of all evils, you may eternally enjoy the glory which he has prepared for those who adore him in spirit and in truth, &c.

This is the practical analysis and in a manner the substance of Christianity. And is there any thing more worthy of God, more capable of attaching the creature to his Maker, than these sentiments; and are they not a proof of the sublimity of that religion which inspires them? I have a Father in heaven; I owe him, therefore, that respect, tenderness, and gratitude, which a child owes to him from whom he received his life: I am not then in his sight a mere and vile automaton, whose actions in no way interest him. He offers me the acquirement of a kingdom; it is true then that I ought to labour in order to gain it, and that I can succeed, since he is pleased to command it. He is ready to forgive me, provided I forgive my enemies; he is therefore full of goodness and mercy, since he seems to com-



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pare my sins against him, to the faults which man has committed against me. He requires me to conform my will to his: is there any thing more just? Is it for a miserable vessel of clay to enter into judgment with him who made it?

The lessons which the great legislator of the new covenant prescribes to me in regard of my neighbour, are neither less precise, nor less worthy of their author. *Never do to another, what you would not have another do to you;* here almost in two words is contained what he has commanded me with regard to my brethren. The unbeliever will say this with him, because he has learnt it from him in his childhood, and he speaks his divine language without being aware of it. Deprived of this help, I doubt if his vain philosophy could go so far. At least it is certain, that this sentence made such an impression, both by its beauty, and by its novelty, on the emperor Alexander Severus, as wise a prince as a pagan could be, that he had it engraved both in his palace, and upon the public buildings*. It is very probable, that he would not have been less taken with those which we have before mentioned, if he had had the happiness to know them. It is at least certain, that they contain nothing which the

* Quam sententiam: *Quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris*, usque adeo dilexit Alexander Severus, ut et in palatio et in publicis operibus juberet præscribi. *Lampridius in vita Elex. Severi.*

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simple light of reason could disavow: and if the natural religion of our new dissertators had not been invented to annihilate all religion, it would admit with pleasure all that is essential in the different articles we have proposed. But let them be contrasted with those which it dares to hold out to us, and they will be found as extravagant, as ours are just and reasonable. The doctrines of infidelity are reducible to these three points. 1st. There is a God, if however there be one: for of this I am not certain. 2dly. This God, if he exists, makes no difference between me and my horse. Men and animals are equally machines in his sight, and he requires no more of one kind than of the other. 3rdly. When this machine, which alone makes up my being, shall perish, every thing will perish with it. My reason assures me so; and this is more than enough to make me perfectly easy. Let us drink then, let us eat, let us make ourselves easy, since we shall so soon die*.

What morality! and can you, Theotime, without indignation, endure the sight of this odious system? Do you find any thing in it worthy of God, any thing that is not unworthy of a soul which bears the stamp of the Divinity; and who feels herself born for immortality by an insurmountable propensity which can only come from infinity itself? The gospel offers

* Manducemus et bibamus: cras enim moriemur. 1 *Cor.* xv. 32.



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you purer, more noble, and more consoling ideas: and this is the last reflection by which I would attach you to it.

IV. A celebrated magistrate once said to me, I love religion, because I find none but her, who presents me with any resource in the sufferings inseparable from this life. I see sickness succeeding health, loss of honour and property to the best established reputation and fortune, and domestic wars to the most tender connections. Abandoned to the simple dictates of nature, what side should I have to take but either that of impotent anger, or fatal despair? In this first emotion, in this involuntary trouble, religion presents herself to me, with truth who is her inseparable companion. She teaches me, that there does not fall a hair from my head without the consent of my Creator*, that in giving me good things, he has reserved to himself the right of depriving me of them when he shall judge it expedient; that there is more mercy than severity in his most rigorous conduct; that he chastises those whom he tenderly loves†; that it is for them to shew that they are no less devoted to him in affliction than in prosperity; that after all, the sufferings of this life bear no proportion to that eternal weight of glory which is prepared for those who carry their cross with humble

* Vide S. Matth. x. 30. S. Luc. xxi. 18.

† Ego quos amo arguo et castigo. *Apoc.* iii. 10. Quem diligit Dominus corripit. *Prov.* iii. 12.

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submission*; that it is true, that nature complains when it suffers violence; but that grace comes to the relief of its weakness, and makes it shed tears far more sweet, than the sinner finds the false joys of the most enchanting entertainments. Supported by these great maxims, which philosophy does not inspire, and much less practise, I soon become another man; and I say like Job: Let thy name be blessed, O my God. Strike, O Lord; thy strokes will be to me favours. Add new wounds to those with which I am already covered. My consolation will be, to see that thou dost not spare me†. Very far from opening my mouth to complain, I will open it only to return thee the most heartfelt thanksgiving. Is it possible that I should not love the cross, seeing that thy Son has loved and chosen it; *and that what he has loved cannot be otherwise than good, since he cannot deceive in his affection*‡.

V. These motives, even if there were no

* Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quæ revelabitur in nobis. *Rom.* viii. 18.—Momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ supra modum in sublimitate æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis. 2 *Cor.* iv. 17.

† Qui cæpit ipse me conterat: solvat manum suam et succidat me: et hæc mihi sit consolatio, ut affligens me dolore, non parcat, nec contradicam sermonibus Sancti. *Job.* vi. 9 *et* 10.

‡ *Ce qu'il a gouté ne peut être que bon, puisqu'il ne trompe pas dans son goût.* This was a saying of M. Boudon, and certainly a very beautiful one.

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others, should suffice to attach you to religion. How much more, if, studying it thoroughly, you shall find it confirmed by the most striking miracles; established in the whole world by twelve simple fishermen; without riches, without credit, without learning, without eloquence; always assaulted by all the powers of hell, and yet always victorious; placed in fine upon the throne of those who had most cruelly persecuted it, and almost always believed in death by those, who, in our days, spend all their lives in labouring for its destruction. Preserve, Theotime, this faith so holy, so pure, and so well supported. Strengthen it in your fellow students; and as youth, when less instructed, is more easily seduced, remove from yourself and from others all the snares which the enemy may spread for you.

VI. The first of these snares, the most dangerous and effectual, is the corruption of the heart. By this incredulity begins. As long as you have no interest in unbelief, you will believe without difficulty. But if once passion gains the ascendancy over your heart; if you give way to pride, to intemperance, or unlawful pleasure, be assured that your faith will be weakened, and it may be extinguished. The pleasures against which conscience protests, are mingled with a bitterness which hardly leaves them any glitter of allurement. They must therefore either be renounced, or else that importunate cry must be stifled which serves to poison them. They begin by ask-

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ing, if it is quite true that there is a hell? if God would condemn them to it for a momentary intoxication? and where would be his justice if he did so? This first step soon leads to irreligion, and they either say with the wicked, that there is no God; or like the fool, that if there be one, he troubles himself very little about what is done or not done by mean and vile creatures *. Live always virtuously, and and you will always think like a Christian, because you will have abundant reasons to be so, and not one to urge you to the contrary.

VII. A second cause of incredulity, is the frequenting those who are infected with it. Those men who blaspheme what they do not know, and who despise the sovereign majesty of God †, speak of religion with as much haughtiness as stupidity. They attempt to anatomize his mysteries; they, who could not dissect an insect. They measure the designs of the Most High by their own. To hear them discourse, He ought to have admitted them to his counsels. If they do not absolutely deny him, because the miracle of the universe arrests them, they at least deny his Providence. The scandals which are

* Nubes latibulum ejus, nec nostra considerat. *Job.* xxii. 14.

† Dominationem spernunt, Majestatem autem blasphemant·····Quæcumque quidem ignorant, blasphemant *S. Judæ ver.* 8 *et* 10.

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sometimes given by those who ought in reality to give nothing but examples of virtue, become in their view decisive arguments. They pass from the contempt of the minister to the contempt of his ministry. They spread with the foulest injustice an odious imputation upon the whole body, which is only merited by some one of its members. All this, put forth with an air of vivacity, and with that seasoning which usually accompanies criticism, staggers a mind which is not yet strong enough to reason very correctly. A little illustration from history, whether true or false, serves as a decisive proof; and because ignorance or errors may have credited a false miracle, he will consider even those as suppositious, which Paganism itself could not help acknowledging *. You are sensible, Theotime, that in all this there is neither truth nor justice of reasoning. And yet how many, and

* Such was the prodigy of the globes of fire, which issuing from the earth with impetuosity, prevented Julian the Apostate and the Jews from reestablishing the temple of Jerusalem. Such again was the miracle of the thundering legion, who by their prayers saved the army of Marcus Aurelius, which was dying with thirst, and was on the point of being cut to pieces by the Quadi. Which obliged the emperor to write to the senate, that he owed the victory to the prayers of the Christian soldiers, and to forbid them to be persecuted for their faith. See *La Religion Chretienne autorisée par le Témoignage des anciens Auteurs païens. T.* i. *chap.* 2 *et* 3.

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even those who are no longer young, are the dupes of such sophistry every day! I will not cease to repeat it to you: Fly, my son, fly from these treacherous shores. The air which you breathe there is poisoned. The most vigorous health is there endangered, and if it ran no other risk than that of being impaired, even this would be a great misfortune.

VIII. With no less care should you avoid the reading of those abominable books, which impiety has brought forth day after day, for a certain number of years. Their style interspersed with deceitful flowers, insinuates itself, and gains ground by degrees like a cancer *. It is smoother and more liquid than oil, and inflicts mortal wounds. It would seem as if their mighty erudition comprehended every age. But when you are convinced, that all this ends in doubting if God wishes to be honoured by his creatures; if he could have prescribed them an exterior form of worship; if he has really prescribed it by a revelation duly authorised; you will need no more to make you detest both the work and its author. He has eloquence, I grant: but thank God, you will find that elsewhere. The Flechiers, the Fenelons, the Massilons, the Rollins, and an infinity of others, have not wanted it. He has erudition, but he has not near so much as Huet, Mabillon, and Bossuet. He has inge-

* Sermo eorum ut cancer serpit. 2 *Tim.* ii. 17.

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nuously diversified his matter : that was easy. When a man seasons his works, like Bayle, with obscenities, he always possesses the talent of pleasing the crowd, because the corrupted crowd always love this style of writing. But rely on it, you will find more correctness and real science in the celebrated Bishop of Meaux, than in all the Deists put together; and if beauty joined to solidity does not tire you, his works will never become tedious. And with what productions so admirable in point of metaphysics, or even of history, have they enriched the public? One volume in *folio*, as its author declares, has only noticed a part of the historical errors of Bayle: and what are we to think of others, who consider him as their divinity, and who will never come near to him, except by their licentious manner of writing and reasoning? I say nothing of their impious and sacrilegious morality. What are we to say of those pretended geniuses, who seriously tell that all laws are arbitrary, and that therefore a man may, by altering them as he pleases, establish what he chooses as crimes and virtues ; *that, far from combating the corporal appetites, it is just to satisfy them ;* and that *the saints who mortified their senses were unfortunate, foolish, and fanatical* *;—I stop here, and perhaps I had better have stopped before. But after all, it is fit that you

* See the pastoral instruction of M. de Belsunce, bishop of Marseilles, upon Incredulity, page 61.

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should know in time, what you are to think of those infamous publications, which will not fail to be extolled before you one day, and proposed to you probably as models in every way. It is true, they may be considered as originals in false deductions and contradictions. These freethinkers, whose only aim is to annihilate the Gospel and degrade its Author, will not scruple to tell you, that the Christian Religion *furnishes proofs without reply of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the immortality of the soul**. And thus iniquity will lie to itself†. But perhaps those who are blind enough not to acknowledge either moral good or evil, are sufficiently so to be insensible of truth or falsehood. Let us leave them, Theotime, to indemnify themselves for our just contempt, by the approbation of those who are like themselves, and still more by the esteem they possess for themselves. Let us conclude with this maxim, which reason will not disavow; there are so many good books of every kind, that a person is inexcusable, if he gives the preference to those which are essentially bad. It would not even be lawful to give it to such as are only doubtful.

* Le monde, son origine et son antiquité. Part 2, page 171.

† Mentita est iniquitas sibi. *Ps.* xxvi.



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### *Prayer.*

YES, my God, I will inviolably attach myself to thy law. The wicked have told me their fables *, but what a difference between them and thy word! I find nothing in their pompous discourses but the delirium of a roving mind; I find in the simplicity of thine, the way, the truth, and the life. I fear nothing, O Lord, either from their empty eloquence, or from the presumptuous tone with which they expose their scandalous maxims. But I have every thing to fear from the weakness of my heart, and the assaults of my passions. Error and darkness are the consequences of sin†. A man disbelieves, when he no longer dares to believe. Faith is weakened in proportion as charity diminishes; and if I do not lose it, what will it profit me without works ‡? O thou who art the Author and Finisher of it, vouchsafe to strengthen it in me by the dew of thy grace. I know now all the value of this precious treasure; let me never forget it. I renounce for ever every connection and eve-

* Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes, sed non ut lex tua. *Ps.* cxviii.

† Error et tenebræ peccatoribus concreatæ sunt. *Eccli.* xi. 16.

‡ The Council of Trent has defined, sess. vi. can. 28. that faith is not always lost when charity is lost. But the Apostle St. James says, (ii. 26.) Fides sine operibus mortua est.

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ry book that might turn me from the way which was trodden by my fathers. The philosophy of the gospel is the only one I will study. Let thy holy scriptures be my chaste delight. I shall think myself happy, and shall be so in effect, if I can know JesusChrist, and him crucified. He shall be my first book; he was the Light of confessors, he can and ought to be mine. It is to him therefore, and to him alone, that I will attach myself. It is in him that I will place all my confidence, and I hope it will not be confounded. *Exultabo in Deo Jesu meo...Mihi adhærere Deo bonum est, ponere in Domino Deo spem meam.* Habac. iii. 18. Ps. lxxii. 28.

## CHAP. X.

*Important Advice, which may be very serviceable to a Student.*

I WILL here resume some of the heads of instruction which I have already given in the course of this little work. I will add some new ones to them. The irregular way in which they may be found will be no detriment to their solidity.

I. The principle with which a scholar should set out, is that salvation ordinarily depends on the good or bad way which is taken in youth. Virtue is never easier than to those



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who have been accustomed to it in their early years. It has its reward even in this world. A young man virtuous, that is to say, modest, temperate, religious in his exercises of piety, full of sweetness towards his neighbour, whoever he may be; such a youth, I say, is loved by God, and cherished by every one. The libertine, on the contrary, is very contemptible, and very much despised. What is more deplorable, he goes from bad to worse, and hardly ever corrects himself.

II. We are often asked, why there are so few young persons who may be truly called virtuous. It is but too easy to answer this question; it is because they change into an odour of death all, or nearly all that should be to them a principle of life. Instead of drawing upon themselves the graces of heaven by a fervent prayer, they only draw down his indignation. They spend a time as precious as that of prayer, in trifling, laughing, and making others laugh. They quarrel for places, loll and lounge in indolent postures, and behave ill in every way: so that they leave the school or the chapel as the Pharisee left the temple, more guilty than when they entered it.

They hear Mass no better than they said their prayers. The angels assist with trembling at this august sacrifice, where the God of Glory is found in person; but as for them, they assist in a manner so light, so thoughtless, not to say so impudent, that they would not dare

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to present themselves before an earthly prince, as they dare to behave in the presence of God. If there is an exhortation given after the gospel, they scarcely deign to pay any attention to it. When they are out of the college, they often omit to hear mass on Sundays and holidays, and yet this is of very strict obligation upon those who have no just reason for being dispensed with. I need not repeat that when mass is heard ill, the precept is not fulfilled, which obliges the faithful to hear it. This is self-evident.

Oftentimes they go so far as to forget the first elements of religion. When they have once made their first communion, they are above assisting at catechism, or even reading it attentively. At the end of a few years, they retain no more than a confused idea of it; and there are some to be found who could no longer repeat the commandments of God and the Church.

There are too many who go to confession by routine and habit, and because it is a regulation of the college. They present themselves at the tribunal, almost without any examination of conscience, and with still less contrition. If from thence they go to the holy table, what will they there find? Their judgment sealed even with the blood of Jesus Christ. How great a misfortune! Can it be heard without shuddering? Let us pass to a less alarming subject.

III. A Christian, and consequently a true



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and faithful student, should often during the day make acts of faith, hope, and charity. There is an indulgence to be gained by making them with their right intention. I have already spoken of it in the morning prayers. He should many times in the day invoke his angel guardian. There is perhaps no student whom this blessed spirit has not preserved from very many dangers. It is he who gives us, by the power of God, those lights of which we stand in need; who makes the incense of our prayers ascend upon the altar of the Most High; who offers them for us, when we are so insensible as to forget our own necessities; who weeps bitterly over our transgressions, when we fall notwithstanding his holy inspirations; who obtains for us the means of rising again; and who watches for us that we may not be surprised by the sleep of death. In spite of all his benefits we very seldom think of him; we very rarely invoke him, and perhaps we have never thanked him when we have escaped a danger, in which we might have lost our lives. Alas! before his eyes we have committed many horrid actions, which we should not have dared to commit in the sight of the lowest of men.

IV. Every one likewise should invoke his holy patron. The Church, by giving us one in baptism, has two objects in view: one, that we may endeavour to imitate him; and the other, that in our necessities we may have recourse to him, in order that he may interest

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himself for us before God. And yet there are perhaps Christians to be found, who have never given this a thought in the whole course of their lives. One day in the year is spent with greater festivity than usual. They *keep their feast*, that is, they dishonour it by more than one kind of excess: and this is all the honour which they render to the saint of their name. If they are to be pitied, who neglect the means of sanctification; what is to be said of those who change them into the means of perdition?

V. But what I cannot too strongly recommend to young persons, or rather, to all ages, is a tender and perfect devotion to the Blessed Virgin. However great the confidence you place in this august queen of angels and men, you will never have too much, provided you make it subordinate to that which you ought to have in her Son; and regulate it by the principles which he has given you. If on the one hand, Mary is the greatest, the fairest, the most perfect model that a simple creature can present you; on the other hand, she is the tenderest of mothers, the most sensible of our wants, and the most capable of relieving them.

The greatest doctors of the Church, the Augustins, the Jeroms, have exhausted themselves in singing her praises. Those who have followed them from age to age, have walked in their footsteps; and still when we read them, we feel that the fire of their ex-

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pressions could not reach the sentiments of their hearts. The Blessed Virgin, says St. John Damascen*, is above all the eulogium that can be lavished on her. No human tongue, no angelic spirit, can celebrate her in a manner proportioned to her greatness. No, says St. Andrew of Crete†, God alone can praise her as she deserves. St. Anselm goes so far as to say, that all power has been given her in heaven and on earth, and that nothing is impossible to her, since she can raise up the hope even of those, who had no other resource left but that of the most frightful despair‡. But it is St. Bernard who deserves to be heard on this subject. This great man, whose only masters were the woods and forests, is far above the common in the different subjects which he treats; but he is above himself in his discourses on the Mother of God. We have sent, said he, before us from earth to heaven an advocate, who being both the Mother of our Judge and the Mother of mercy, cannot fail to treat efficaciously of the affair of

* Beata Virgo omnium encomiorum legem excedit. Virginem hanc non hominum lingua, non mundo sublimior angelorum mens, sat dignis laudibus efferre potest. *Joan. Damasc. orat. de Assumpt.*

† Hanc Dei tantùm est pro dignitate laudare. *S. Andreas Cret. Orat. de dormit. Virginis.*

‡ Data est illi omnis potestas in cœlo et in terra. Nihil illi impossibile, cui possibile est et relevare in spem salutis desperantes. *S. Anselm. de laudib. B. Virginis.*

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our salvation*. My little children, *he said again, speaking to his brethren,* Mary is the ladder of sinners; she is the great subject of my confidence; she is the motive, the foundation of all my hope†. *Blessed Virgin,* he says in another place ‡, *I consent that no one shall ever speak of your mercies, if there can be any one found to say that you have failed him, when he invoked you in his necessities.* How fine are these words, my dear Theotime; but how well have they been verified by the experience of all ages! *Yes,* continues the holy doctor, *in Mary the captive finds his ransom, the sick man his health, he who is plunged in sorrow his consolation, the just an increase of grace, the sinner mercy and forgiveness* §.

Draw near then to this holy virgin, all you who desire to be presented to her Son. Have recourse to her in your pains, in your distress, in the troubles of your conscience, in the tem-

* Advocatam præmisit peregrinatio nostra, quæ tanquam Judicis Mater, et Mater misericordiæ, supplicitèr et efficacitèr salutis nostræ negotia pertractabit. *S. Bernard. Serm. de Assumpt.*

† Filioli, hæc peccatorum scala, hæc mea magna fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ. *Idem. Serm. de aquæ ductu.*

‡ Sileat misericordiam tuam, Virgo Beata, si quis est qui invocatam te in necessitatibus meminerit defuisse. *Idem. Serm. 2 de Assumpt.*

§ Inveniunt in Maria captivus redemptionem, æger curationem, tristis consolationem, justus gratiam, peccator veniam. *S. Bernard.*

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pests which are sure to agitate this miserable life. Invoke the star of the sea, call to her for protection, shelter yourself under her wings. By following her you will not stray from the right road. By praying to her you will neither fall into dejection nor despair. By thinking of her you will have no false steps or illusions to apprehend. As long as she stretches out her hand, you will not stumble. As long as she defends you, you will be sheltered from every insult. When she serves you as a guide, you will not be weary on your way. When she is propitious to you, you will not fail to arrive at the term of your course, that is, to life eternal. "Mariam sequens non "devias, ipsam rogans non desperas, ipsam "cogitans non erras, ipsâ tenente non corruis, "ipsâ protegente non metuis, ipsâ duce non "fatigaris, ipsâ propitiâ pervenis." *S. Bernard.*

Do not pass then a single day without rendering her your just tribute of homage. Profit with holy ardour of all the occasions which are offered you by the Church, to testify in a high degree the respect you have for her. Recite the *Angelus* regularly at the sound of the bell. Be bold enough, when you hear it ring, to take off your hat, and say it as you walk along. The world, even the world will know how to do justice to your piety, and perhaps you will gain some followers. But, my dear son, I conjure you by that tender regard which you have so often professed for me, and which, I think, I have in some degree merited

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by my tenderness towards you, to say at least once a day the little prayer which you will find at the end of this book. I can assure you that it has already done wonders, and it is easy to conclude that it may still produce them.

But God forbid that you should ever forget, that in order to rely on the protection of the Blessed Virgin, you must endeavour to walk in her footsteps and imitate her virtues, and especially her unspotted purity. Let a sinner then salute her with the whole Church, as the refuge of those who have had the misfortune to offend her Son; let him hope that she will deign to suspend the effects of his just indignation, and will oppose herself like a wall to the thunderbolt he is ready to dart. But let him not be so senseless as to imagine, that she will obtain for him time to persevere in his disorders. To suppose that she will look down favourably upon a wretch, who, while he wears her livery, is a disgrace to it; and that she will present herself, as by appointment, to a criminal who has grown old in iniquity, to give him warning that he has now only two days to live, and that at length he must reform his conduct; this is insulting religion, and transforming her by a daring mockery into a protectress of sin, who, after the example of the God of holiness, hates it with a perfect detestation. Can she consider as her own respectful servants, unfaithful Christians who dishonour her divine Son? Will she solicit new graces in favour of those, who

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continually abuse what she has already procured for them? Will she procure our salvation in spite of us, when even God will not save us without our concurrence? *Procul hæc ab ore fidelium.* Let us return then to that sentence of St. Bernard: *Si Mariam diligitis, si vultis ei placere, æmulamini.*

VI. To the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, unite that of St. Joseph. As the scripture has said every thing of Mary by calling her the Mother of Jesus, it has said every thing of Joseph by calling him the spouse of Mary and the father of the Word incarnate. And with what graces must not he have been inundated, who drew at the fountain head, and drew without interruption? A man who had before his eyes the two finest models that ever existed? A man who after having a thousand times carried the world's Redeemer in his arms, deserved to die in the arms of that Redeemer? But what should further animate your confidence is, that St. Joseph shares with Jesus and Mary those sentiments of goodness which they entertain for you; that he has in proportion as much influence with Mary, as Mary has with Jesus; and that he desires nothing more than to employ this influence in favour of us. Let us go to him then in our necessities, as the inhabitants of Egypt went to the former Joseph in their indigence. To have an intercessor as zealous as he is powerful, and to neglect him, is an insensibility utterly inexplicable.

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VII. But you cannot be ignorant that all these devotions must be referred to Jesus Christ, who is their end and object. If we have recourse to the saints, it is not to stop there, but that they may conduct us to the Man God, according to the laws which he has established. However great the martyrs were, *says St. Augustin*, there is none that can be compared to the Head of the martyrs. He is the source, they are only the rivulets, and from them to him the distance will be always infinite. If the splendour of the glory of the Son of God dazzles you, if his quality of Judge intimidates you, consider him under milder relations. Cast your eyes upon his crib, you will find him an infant, and the most lovely, the tenderest of infants. Pass on from Bethlehem to Calvary. Contemplate there that head crowned with thorns; that majestic countenance dishonoured by the most unworthy treatment; those beautiful eyes extinguished by blood and tears; those hands and feet pierced through with nails; that side opened by you and for you, by your crimes and for love of you. Will not this spectacle, which split asunder the rocks, make an impression on you also? I have better sentiments of you, and I may tell you once again, with the apostle: *Confidimus de vobis, dilectissimi, meliora et viciniora saluti.*

I conclude with three or four points of advice, which, although very unconnected, may be acceptable to you, and far from unprofitable.



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VIII. The first is, that what passes in the interior of the college, ought not to transpire abroad. The public, and even your own family, have no need of being informed that such a one has given scandal, that he has been more or less humbled, &c. These are *school secrets*, says an old proverb. You would not be well pleased for others to go and repeat your faults and little disgraces. Do towards your schoolfellow, as you would be very glad for him to do for you. These indiscreet and always uncharitable tales sometimes go so far as to trouble the peace of families.

IX. The second piece of advice I have to give you, is to distrust yourself very much, whether in those moments of languor, in which the mind dull and torpid feels nothing but disgust for exercises of piety; or in those moments of fervour, in which a kind of transport makes it think there is nothing that can impede it; and in which it would willingly say like St. Peter: I am ready, O Lord, to follow thee to prison and to death.

In the first case endeavour to arm yourself against your own indolence. Retrench nothing of your ordinary exercises. *It is still a portion of time which you desire to give to God**. Involuntary disgust is not a sin. The more any action costs us, the more is it meritorious. At least we eat from reason, when infirmity prevents us from eating with an appetite.

* A beautiful remark of Madame de Maintenon.

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In the second case, do not give yourself up to the sallies of a devotion wrongly understood. Do not form any considerable projects without the approbation of your director. Above all, never make a vow without his participation. All vows induce a very serious obligation: hence they may become a source of uneasiness, and sometimes even of sin, because they are badly performed, or not performed at all. The following is related of St. Francis of Sales, by M. John Peter Camus, Bishop of Belley.

" A person having learnt that our saint had " made a vow in his youth to recite the rosary " every day, desired to do the same, but would " not do it without his advice. He said to " him: Take care not to do it. The other " replied; Why would you refuse to others " the advice which you took for yourself even " from your youth? That word youth decides " the affair, *replied the saint*, because at that " time I did it with less consideration: but " now that I am more advanced in age, I say " to you: Do it not. I do not say to you; " Do not recite it. On the contrary, I advise " you to say it as much as I can, and exhort " you not to pass a day without saying it, " because it is a prayer very agreeable to God " and to the B. Virgin, but let it be by a pure " and firm resolution, rather than by a vow; " so that when you may chance to omit it, " you may not be exposed to the danger of " offending God; for it is not enough to have " vowed, we must pay our vows and that under



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" pain of sin, which is not a small considera-
" tion. I assure you this has often embar-
" rassed me; and I have often been on the
" point of applying for a dispensation from it,
" or at least of having it commuted for some
" other work of equal importance, but of less
" subjection*. The authority of so prudent and pious a prelate as the holy bishop of Geneva, is equivalent in this matter to a demonstration.

X. The last advice I have to give you, my dear Theotime, or rather, I have to give others, is to ask often of our Lord, and to ask of him early in life, to let you know the way in which you should walk, that is to say, the state of life to which he is pleased to call you. You can hardly, at the age of ten or twelve, decide for the bar, or for the cloister; but you can very well, and perhaps very ill decide for yourself, or let yourself be determined for the ecclesiastical state, because it may be entered at an early age. But though I cannot help exhorting you to have a great deference for your parents, I must still admonish you that their advice is often to be suspected in this matter. In this unhappy age where little is consulted but avarice, the hope of a good benefice which offers, and which only requires the qualification of the tonsure, becomes too often an invincible proof of a vocation. A

* See L'Esprit de S. F. de Sales, part 8, chap. 16, p. 254.

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youth is not the eldest of a numerous family; or if he is, he has no talents to shine in the world; he is not rich and his condition requires him to apply to learning; this is sufficient, and his lot is decided. He is conducted to the altar like a victim to be immolated upon it, and who knows not to what he is destined*.

There is no absolute engagement, *it is said*, in simple benefices; and what may be taken, may be resigned. This is the reasoning and the perversion of the world. But in reality nothing creates a stronger engagement than a step which they dare to consider as creating none. It involves the eternal salvation of those parents who possess the sanctuary by inheritance †; who give it a wicked or a doubtful minister; who take upon their own conscience a quantity of office very badly recited, and sometimes wholly omitted. It involves the patrons, and sometimes the ordinary superiors, who, through fear, undue respect of persons, or similar motives, lend their hands to iniquity. In fine, it involves the incumbent, who, oftentimes with a soul the least ecclesiastical that ever lived, pursues a career from which God had excluded him, does not fulfil any of his duties well, and prepares for himself a treasure of wrath against the day of the Lord.

* Quasi bos ductus ad victimam....et ignorans quòd ad vincula trahatur. *Prov.* vii. 22.

† Hereditate possideamus sanctuarium Dei. *Ps.* lxxxii. 11.



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But what then can a young man do who is solicited by his parents to enter among the clergy? He can and ought to consult God a great deal by prayer, and by all the good works of which he is capable. He ought also to apply to a prudent and enlightened man, expose to him the strong and weak parts of his mind and heart, give him time to make a proper examination, await his decision with tranquillity, and follow it with perfect submission. There are still Ananiases upon the earth*; and if we do not find them, it is because we do not seek them in earnest, and oftentimes we are afraid to meet with them. This misfortune will not befal you, Theotime; let us both pray that it may happen to no one else.

*Prayer.*

A PRINCE after thy own heart, used often to repeat to thee: Vouchsafe, O my God, to mark out for me the way in which I should walk, to arrive at the possession of thee †; for this is the only desire I have on earth. I make to thee, O Lord, the same prayer; give

* Ananias was the man to whom our Lord directed St. Paul, to learn from him the designs he had towards him

† Notam fac mihi viam in quâ ambulem; quia ad te levavi animam meam. *Ps.* cxlii.

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me grace to make it with the same fervour. I know that thou appointest for every one of thy soldiers the post at which he is to fight, and that thou dost not give a blessing to those who place themselves here or there, without consulting thee. This is enough to keep me in perfect dependence. I beseech thee, never to permit to make a single step without thy direction. Holy angel, who watchest in my defence, who hast hitherto preserved me from so many dangers, and whose kind favours I have so faintly acknowledged, be pleased, notwithstanding my ingratitude, to unite with me to obtain for me grace to follow in all things the designs of divine Providence. I implore the same thing of you, O great saint, who were given me in baptism, as a model and protector. I ask it of you, O chaste spouse of the most holy Mother that ever existed. And you, O holy Virgin, who take pleasure in seconding the efforts of a young heart who desires to belong to your Son, receive the first fruits of mine, to present them to him. O you, whom the whole Church so justly calls the Mother of Mercy, be you eternally my mother. I will not pass a day of my life without tenderly imploring your protection. O Mary! O name which gives birth to the most just and the sweetest expectations! I will invoke you during the course of my studies; I will invoke you in a more advanced age: I will endeavour to call upon you in my latest moments. May I have

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the happiness to expire repeating with the greatest tenderness the names of Jesus and Mary !

## NOTE.

*As this little Work is not compiled for the lower schools alone, and persons in authority have judged it likely to benefit even students in divinity, whether in colleges or communities, I have thought it proper to subjoin something concerning the system of F. Hardouin, upon the supposition of the ecclesiastical as well as profane authors. This dangerous scholar proposed this new idea in a pamplet entitled,* De numis Herodiadum. *The following is the substance of it, as he explained it in his discourses, in some writings, and which may be easily inferred from his works, printed in Holland.*

According to him, in the thirteenth century there were very few books. There were only the Vulgate, Pliny, Virgil's Georgics, the works of Cicero, the Satires and Epistles of Horace. The Emperor Frederick the Second formed the design of destroying the Christian religion, by circulating all at once a multitude

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of books. He induced the Benedictines of Germany, Italy, France, and England, to enter into his scheme. All the authors, ecclesiastical and profane, which we consider as ancient, are the work of these monks.

F. Hardouin's superiors disavowed and condemned this mischievous system, as may be seen in the Memoirs of Trévoux for the month of December 1708. They likewise forced its author to retract it: he did so, but he did not change his opinion.

One of his most spirited antagonists was F. René-Joseph de Tournemine, whom F. Hardouin had endeavoured to gain over *. I have twice heard him relate the ten proofs which he made use of to undeceive his companion and friend. A virtuous friend, to whom he himself dictated them, having been pleased to communicate them to me, I have thought it my duty to insert them here. I do it the more willingly, as I believe they have never before appeared in print. They are very laconic: but with a little reflection, it will be easy to discover all their strength.

The system of F. Hardouin is extravagant. It contains twelve impossibilities.

1. We see, that from the thirteenth century down to the present, each century has only possessed a certain number of geniuses.

* F. de Tournemine died the 16th of May, 1739, aged 78; F. Hardouin had departed on the 3d of September, 1729, aged 83.

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It is impossible that the thirteenth century should have contained enough to supply twenty centuries.

II. Every age has a certain character of style. It is impossible that one single century should have comprised every kind of style, Virgil and Prudentius, Cicero and Symmachus, Titus Livius, and Paul the Deacon, &c.

III. And what century possessed so many great men and so many styles. If we may judge by the undoubted specimens preserved in the treasure of the king's papers, it is the most gross and barbarous of all centuries.

IV. It must indeed have been very barbarous and very gross, not to perceive so manifest an imposture.

V. All the genius of that century must have been confined to the Benedictines.

VI. They must all have become impostors and villains.

VII. Not one must have been converted.

VIII. They must never have had any disputes together; for irritated monks will reproach each other with their artifices.

IX. They must have made the Church receive books full of Atheism and errors to become the monuments of her doctrine; and she must by their artifices have adopted the Hebrew text, the Greek text, the Septuagint Version, the Councils, the works of the Fathers, as authentic documents, although they were only supposed works, invented to destroy religion.

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X. They must have made the Greek Church receive these works, which was at that time separated from the Latin Church, and very jealous of all that came from the Latins.

XI. They must have imposed these same works upon the Nestorians, the Jacobites, and other sects, who are no less separated from the Greek than from the Latin Church.

XII. But what is far more inconceivable, is that since the thirteenth century no one should have discovered that these books contained Atheism and capital errors against religion. Whence it results, that in a century and ever since a century which possessed sufficient talent to counterfeit Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostome, Augustine, &c. there has been no clever man found but F. Hardouin.

This system then cannot be corrected by reducing it to the admission of only a small number of supposed books : for when once we establish that a book was supposed in the thirteenth century, it must be maintained, that all those who have quoted it before the thirteenth century are supposititious. All those likewise, who have quoted from these, must be suppositious : which involves the universal supposition.

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# PRAYERS

**Which Students may recite occasionally.**

## LITANY

*In Honour of the Infancy of* JESUS CHRIST.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Kyrie, eleison.* | Lord, have mercy on us. |
| *Christe, eleison.* | Christ, have mercy on us. |
| *Kyrie, eleison.* | Lord, have mercy on us. |
| *Jesu infans, audi nos.* | Infant Jesus, hear us. |
| *Jesu infans, exaudi nos.* | Infant Jesus, graciously hear us. |
| *Pater de cœlis Deus, miserere nobis.* | God, the Father of heaven, have mercy on us. |
| *Fili, Redemptor mundi Deus,* | God the Son, Redeemer of the world, |
| *Spiritus sancte Deus,* | God the Holy Ghost, |
| *Sancta Trinitas unus Deus,* | Holy Trinity, one God, |
| *Infans Jesu Christe,* | Infant Jesus Christ, |
| *Infans Deus vere,* | Infant true God, |
| *Infans Fili Dei vivi,* | Infant Son of the living God, |
| *Infans Fili Mariæ Virginis,* | Infant Son of the Virgin Mary, |

*Miserere nobis.* — Have mercy on us.

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|---|---|
| *Infans ante luciferum genite,* | Infant begotten before the day-star, |
| *Infans Verbum caro factum,* | Infant Word made flesh, |
| *Infans sapientia Patris,* | Infant wisdom of the Father, |
| *Infans integritas Matris,* | Infant integrity of thy Mother, |
| *Infans Patris unigenite,* | Infant only begotten of thy Father, |
| *Infans Matris primogenite,* | Infant first-born of thy Mother, |
| *Infans imago Patris,* | Infant image of thy Father, |
| *Infans origo Matris,* | Infant origin of thy Mother, |
| *Infans Patris splendor,* | Infant splendor of thy Father, |
| *Infans Matris honor.* | Infant honour of thy Mother, |
| *Infans æqualis Patri,* | Infant equal to thy Father, |
| *Infans subdite Matri,* | Infant subject to thy Mother, |
| *Infans Patris deliciæ,* | Infant delight of thy Father, |
| *Infans Matris divitiæ,* | Infant riches of thy Mother, |
| *Infans donum Patris,* | Infant gift of thy Father, |
| *Infans munus Matris,* | Infant present of thy Mother, |

*Miserere nobis.* Have mercy on us.



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| | |
|---|---|
| *Infans partus Virginis,* | Infant offspring of a Virgin, |
| *Infans Creator hominis,* | Infant Creator of man, |
| *Infans virtus Dei,* | Infant power of God, |
| *Infans fulcimen mundi,* | Infant support of the world, |
| *Infans Deus noster,* | Infant our God, |
| *Infans frater noster,* | Infant our brother, |
| *Infans viator in gloriâ,* | Infant traveller in glory, |
| *Infans comprehensor in viâ,* | Infant attainer yet on earth, |
| *Infans vir ab utero,* | Infant a man from the womb, |
| *Infans senex a puero,* | Infant aged even from a child, |
| *Infans Pater sæculorum,* | Infant Father of ages, |
| *Infans aliquot dierum,* | Infant of a few days, |
| *Infans vita lactens,* | Infant life, nourished at the breast, |
| *Infans verbum silens,* | Infant Word in silence, |
| *Infans fulgurans in cœlis,* | Infant thundering in the heavens, |
| *Infans vagiens in cunis,* | Infant weeping in a cradle, |
| *Infans terror inferni,* | Infant terror of hell, |
| *Infans jubilus paradisi,* | Infant joy of paradise, |

*Miserere nobis.* Have mercy on us.

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|---|---|
| *Infans tyrannis formidabilis,* | Infant formidable to tyrants, |
| *Infans magis desiderabilis,* | Infant desired by the wise men, |
| *Infans exul a populo,* | Infant exiled from thy people, |
| *Infans Rex in exilio,* | Infant King in exile, |
| *Infans idolorum eversor,* | Infant overthrower of idols, |
| *Infans gloriæ Patris zelator,* | Infant zealous for thy Father's glory, |
| *Infans fortis in debilitate,* | Infant strong in weakness, |
| *Infans potens in exilitate,* | Infant powerful in exile, |
| *Infans thesaurus gratiæ,* | Infant treasure of grace, |
| *Infans fons justitiæ,* | Infant fountain of justice, |
| *Infans instaurator cœlestium,* | Infant restorer of heavenly things, |
| *Infans reparator terrestrium,* | Infant repairer of earthly things, |
| *Infans caput angelorum,* | Infant head of angels, |
| *Infans radix patriarcharum,* | Infant root of patriarchs, |
| *Infans sermo prophetarum,* | Infant word of prophets, |
| *Infans desiderium gentium,* | Infant desire of nations, |

*Miserere nobis.* Have mercy on us.



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|---|---|---|
| *Infans gaudium pastorum,* | Infant joy of the shepherds, | Have mercy on us. |
| *Infans lumen magorum,* | Infant light of the wise men, | |
| *Infans salus infantium,* | Infant salvation of infants, | |
| *Infans expectatio justorum,* | Infant expectation of the just, | |
| *Infans doctor sapientium,* | Infant doctor of the wise, | |
| *Infans primitiæ sanctorum omnium,* | Infant first fruits of all saints, | |
| *Propitius esto, Parce nobis, infans Jesu.* | Be merciful unto us, Spare us, infant Jesus. | |
| *Propitius esto, Exaudi nos, infans Jesu.* | Be merciful unto us, Hear us, infant Jesus. | |
| *A jugo servitutis filiorum Adæ, Libera nos infans Jesu.* | From the servitude of the children of Adam, Deliver us, infant Jesus. | |
| *A captivitate diabolica, Libera nos, infans Jesu.* | From the captivity of the devil, Deliver us, infant Jesus. | |
| *A nequitiâ sæculi,* | From the wickedness of the world, | Deliver, &c. |
| *A concupiscentiâ carnis,* | From the concupiscence of the flesh, | |
| *A superbiâ vitæ,* | From the pride of life, | |

*Miserere nobis.*

*Libera, &c.*

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*Ab ordinatâ sciendi cupiditate,* From an inordinate desire of knowing,
*A cæcitate mentis,* From blindness of mind,
*A malâ voluntate* From ill-will,
*A peccatis nostris,* From our sins,
*Per purissimam conceptionem tuam,* By thy most pure conception,
*Per humillimam nativitatem tuam,* By thy humble nativity,
*Per lacrymas tuas,* By thy tears,
*Per durissimam circumcisionem tuam,* By thy most painful circumcision,
*Per gloriosissimam manifestationem tuam,* By thy most glorious manifestation,
*Per devotissimam præsentationem tuam,* By thy most devout presentation,
*Per innocentissimam conversationem tuam,* By thy most innocent conversation,
*Per divinissimam vitam tuam,* By thy most divine life,
*Per paupertatem tuam,* By thy poverty,
*Per passiones tuas,* By thy sufferings,
*Per peregrinationes et labores tuos,* By thy journeys and labours,
*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Parce nobis, infans Jesu.* Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Spare us, infant Jesus.

*Libera nos, infans Jesu.* Deliver us, infant Jesus.



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*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Exaudi nos, infans Jesu.* Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Hear us, infant Jesus.

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis, infans Jesu.* Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us, infant Jesus.

*Jesu infans, audi nos.* Infant Jesus, hear us.

*Jesu infans, exaudi nos.* Infant Jesus, graciously hear us.

*Oremus.* Let us pray.

*Domine Jesu, qui sublimitatem incarnatæ divinitatis tuæ, et humanitatis tuæ divinissimæ usque ad humillimum nativitatis et infantiæ statum pro nobis exinanire dignatus es; da nobis ut divinam in infantiâ sapientiam, in debilitate potentiam, in exilitate majestatem agnoscentes, te parvulum adoremus in terris, te magnum intueamur in cœlis: Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in uni-* O Lord Jesus, who hast vouchsafed to annihilate the sublimity of thy incarnate divinity, and most divine humanity, even to the most lowly state of nativity and infancy; grant that, acknowledging thy divine wisdom in infancy, thy power in weakness, and thy majesty in littleness, we may adore thee, a little one on earth, and behold thee great in heaven: Who livest and reign-

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*tate Spiritûs Sancti, Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum.*

est with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.

R. *Amen.*

R. Amen.

V. *Exaudiat nos Dominus Jesu infans.*

V. May our infant Lord Jesus hear us.

R. *Nunc et semper. Amen.*

R. Now and for ever. Amen.

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## *LITANY OF PENITENTS.*

*Kyrie, eleison.*
*Christe, eleison.*

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.

*Kyrie, eleison,*
*Jesu, audi nos.*
*Jesu, exaudi nos.*

Lord, have mercy on us.
Jesus, hear us.
Jesus, graciously hear us.

*Pater de cœlis Deus, miserere nobis.*

God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.

*Fili, Redemptor mundi Deus, miserere nobis.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

*Spiritus Sancte Deus, miserere nobis.*

God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.

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*Sancta Trinitas unus Deus,*
Holy Trinity, one God,

*Deus, qui non vis mortem impii, sed ut convertatur et vivat,*
O God, who willest not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live,

*Qui Davidis confitentis, et in cilicio pœnitentis peccatum transtulisti,*
Thou who didst take away the sin of David when he confessed it, and did penance in sackcloth and ashes,

*Qui venisti in hunc mundum peccatores salvos facere,*
Thou who camest into this world to save sinners,

*Qui dives in misericordia, propter nimiam charitatem quâ dilexisti nos, cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificasti nos in Christo,*
Thou, who being rich in mercy, thro' the abundant charity with which thou hast loved us when we were dead in sin, hast raised us up again in Christ,

*Miserere nobis.* Have mercy on us.

*Qui attritus es propter scelera nostra,*
Thou who wert bruised for our crimes,

*Qui venisti quærere et salvum facere quod perierat,*
Thou who didst come to seek and to save that which

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*Qui omnes homines vis salvos fieri,*

Thou who wishest all men to be saved,

*Deus benigne et misericors, patiens et multæ misericordiæ, et præstabilis super malitia,*

O God good and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and even greater than our malice,

*Peccatores, te rogamus audi nos,*

We sinners, beseech thee hear us,

*Ut abnegantes impietatem, et sæcularia desideria, sobriè, justè, et piè vivamus,*

That denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we may live soberly, and justly, and godly,

*Te rogamus, audi nos.*

We beseech thee, hear us.

*Ut non inebriemur vino in quo est luxuria sed impleamur Spiritu Sancto,*

That we may not be drunk with wine, in which is luxury, but be filled with the Holy Ghost,

*Ut omnis sermo malus ex ore nostro non procedat, sed si quis bonus, ad ædificationem fidei,*

That no unbecoming word may proceed from our mouth, but every good word, for the edification of faith,

*Ut peccatis mortui, justitiæ vivamus,*

That being dead to sin, we may live to justice,

*Ut per bona opera certam vocatio-*

That we may strive by good works to

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*nem nostram facere satagamus,*
make our vocation sure,

*Ut corpora nostra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium nostrum exhibeamus,*
That we may exhibit our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God our reasonable service,

*Ut qui ore confitemur Deum, factis non negemus,*
That confessing God with our lips, we may not deny him by our works,

*Te rogamus, audi nos.*
We beseech thee, hear us.

*Ut errantes, in spiritu lenitatis et mansuetudinis instruamus,*
That we may instruct those that err in the spirit of lenity and meekness,

*Ut gratiam Dei in vacuum non recipiamus,*
That we may not receive the grace of God in vain,

*Ut sanctorum intuentes conversationem, eorum et patientiam imitemur,*
That beholding the life and conversation of the saints, we may also imitate their patience,

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, adauge nobis fidem.*
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, increase our faith,

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, infunde nobis spem.*
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, infuse into us hope,

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*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, accende in nobis caritatem.*
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, enkindle in us charity.

*Kyrie, eleison.*
Lord, have mercy on us.

*Christe, eleison.*
Christ, have mercy on us.

*Kyrie, eleison.*
Lord, have mercy on us.

*Pater noster, &c.*
Our Father, &c.

*Oremus.*
Let us pray.

*Deus qui nullum respuis, sed quantumvis peccantibus per pœnitentiam piâ miseratione placaris; respice propitius ad preces humilitatis nostræ, et illumina cor nostrum, ut tua valeamus implere præcepta; Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.*
O God, who rejectest no one, but art appeased by thy tender mercy at the repentance of the greatest sinners; look down favourably upon the prayers of our humility, and enlighten our hearts, that we may be enabled to fulfil thy commandments: thro' Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## PRAYER

### To the most holy VIRGIN MOTHER of GOD.

THE faithful cannot be too earnestly exhorted to recite often the short prayer which we here present them. They may be well assured, that since its establishment in the Church, it has witnessed the happiest results. It was by this that St. Francis of Sales, after being tormented for a month with a cruel idea of reprobation, recovered in a moment that peace which floods of tears had not been able to procure for him. It was also by this that M. Bernard*, celebrated for his tenderness to the poor, and particularly to prisoners, had the happiness to convert a poor wretch, who was condemned to the punishment of the wheel, and struck with horror at hearing his sentence read to him, would not hear a word of God, nor of the torments which he prepares for the hardened sinner. The following is the prayer in Latin and English.

| *Oratio.* | *Prayer.* |
|---|---|
| *MEMORARE O piissima Virgo Maria, non esse* | REMEMBER, O most pious Virgin Mary, |

* Claude Bernard, surnamed the Poor Priest, died at Paris on the 23d of March, 1641. He has a kind of Mausoleum to charity. It was he who established the Seminary of the Thirty-three.

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*auditum a sæculo quemquam ad tua currentem præsidia tua implorantem auxilia, tua petentem suffragia esse derelictum. Ego tali animatus confidentiâ ad te Virgo Virginum Mater, curro, ad te venio, coram te gemens peccator assisto. Noli, Mater Verbi, verba mea despicere, sed audi propitia et exaudi. Amen.*

that it has never been heard of in any age, that any one who had recourse to your protection, implored your assistance, or sought your intercession, was rejected. Animated with this confidence, I run to thee, O Virgin Mother of Virgins, I come to thee, I stand before thee an afflicted sinner. Do not despise my prayer, O Mother of the Word incarnate, but favourably and graciously hear me. Amen.

*Monstra te esse Matrem :*
*Sumat per te preces,*
*Qui pro nobis natus,*
*Tulit esse tuus.*

Exert the Mother's care,
And us thy children crown :
To Him convey our prayer,
Who chose to be thy Son.

FINIS.



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